

***The Politics of Speculation: On Power and Utopia.***

***Michael Kent Jenson***

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### ***Abstract of Thesis***

Within the realm of politics, there are two forces which have considerable influence upon the social dynamics of a society because they comprise the fundamental desires of human nature and influence the common aspirations that a society might possess. They are the components of Man's inner striving which presuppose all political systems and societal constructs. The first of these, generally defined as the utopian impulse, pertains to the forward-looking or visionary component of a culture. It is the element of a society's common will that sets forth the image of a desired future which motivates its social and political structures to produce corresponding speculative projections in real and practical terms. Without such objectives, the progress of a culture may falter and cultural atrophy sets in which leads to an overall decline involving the quality of life of its members. If this trend continues unabated, cultural stagnation sets in giving rise to social unrest, apathy, and disillusionment.

Closely related to this, is another intrinsic drive contained within human nature which compels Mankind to forge its social constructs in reference to the narrative devised by the utopian consciousness into a practical political discourse which presupposes social and political action. It is this alliance between utopian speculation and the existing hierarchies of power which provides the basic attributes needed to bring about benevolent transformations within the institutional structure of a particular society. Consequently, coupled with these potential benefits are certain dangers involving the emergence of repressive forces and alienated states of Being, which can also be product of the interaction between power and utopia. If the political visions of a society are overly fantastic to the point of being a mythical structure with not even a remote possibility of attainment, the converse of the enrichments of the lives of a society's inhabitants occurs and the vision produces disillusionment, cynicism, and oppression within its domain.

With the ongoing formation of a global economic and political structure, the rise in the practice of total war, and the decline in the influence of traditionally powerful ideologies, a reassessment of the dynamics of modern societal goals is required in order to clarify the needs of contemporary Man in relation to the modern State. The departure point for such an analysis should be the fundamental ground of why societies and governments are formed. The perpetual interaction of the attributes of power and utopia plays an integral part in this process and thus, must be analysed in reference to this ground. As the old political ideologies redefine themselves and modern regimes search for new identities and symbols which can aid in the maintenance of their shroud of legitimacy, clarification of certain aspects of the utopian impulse and how such notions are applied to develop strategies that can transform and guide existing power structures is imperative. Such a study may prove beneficial in regards to providing a ground for speculation on the potential constitution of political institutions which can strike the best possible balance between these forces allowing for the production of altruistic institutions while avoiding possibly malignant ones.

### ***Declaration***

I declare that the work contained within this submission was undertaken and composed through my own efforts. All secondary texts have been referenced and the authors given full credit for their efforts, where appropriate.

Michael/K. Jensen



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## **Introduction:**

### ***The Connection of Power and Utopia***

Within modern times, the images of the ideal community produced by the utopian endeavour have come under repeated attacks which describe them, not as shining archetypes depicting the potential of Mankind, but as examples of the human capacity for folly and tyranny.<sup>1</sup> Though attacks are understandable given some of the horrific events that have occurred under the pretext of the construction of a better world, a swing to the extreme of the opposing view is equally as dangerous. There is a certain possibility that such events will emerge, but it is a questionable stance to assert that all enterprises deemed utopian are camouflaged avenues to either slavery or destruction. As has been shown repeatedly throughout history, there is a certain danger of tyranny or abuse with any method of social or political theory, but this risk does not outweigh the potential benefits. For within this same history, utopian speculation has served to inform men of possible social structures that are conducive to the fulfilment of their potential and can continue in this role if practised with

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<sup>1</sup>Though the tradition of anti-utopianism re-emerged within the modern era with the criticism of Marx and Engels, the tradition itself can be traced to the advent of the earliest Greek utopias. A prominent example is Aristotle's critique of Plato's ideal commonwealth. For a well argued example of this type of critique put forth within this century; see Karl Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*. Vol. I: Plato. 5th edition. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977).

temperance. To achieve this, the majority of the misconceptions surrounding this methodology must be dispelled and its inherent function clarified. Only after this process, will it be possible to assess the true role and relationship to the forces that formulate human societies. Thus, the task of this exploration is to uncover the intrinsic nature and potential of utopia as well as its connection to the reality of the social realm.

In undertaking this, it is imperative to understand the cause of many of the misconceptions surrounding such endeavours. In many classical utopian texts, such as Plato's *Republic*, one is struck immediately by the rigidity of its organisation. The patterning of its institutions, especially those pertaining to the structuring of its class system, the indoctrination prevalent within the educational system, and the administration of its laws, seem to point to an intentional undermining of the attributes involving individual freedom in favour of the demands of a unified communal structure. Admittedly, some of the descriptions contained within this account seem to contradict our modern democratic ideals, but before it is cast aside as totalitarian and thereby condemning the tradition of thought which emulates its form<sup>2</sup>, it is important to understand the underlying intent behind such a project.

According to Plato's description, the commonwealth was to be a singular and self-sufficient entity containing as many varied economic activities as the allotted space and resources would allow without creating conditions ripe for social friction. To create and perpetuate a sense of unity<sup>3</sup>, the regulation of the size of the city as well as the limitation of access to outside influences was to be closely monitored by the ruling elite. The rigidity of its institutions was also evident in the configuration of its class structures. These structures were to contain three class distinctions correlating to a preconceived division of labour that would supposedly create the most stable and harmonious of social environments. To maintain this stability, no movement between these classes was admissible except under extraordinary conditions and

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<sup>2</sup>As Theodore Olson points out on page 157 of his text; *Millennialism, Utopianism, and Progress*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), Plato was putting forth an argument for justice, and not a depiction of a society encompassing a naive belief in reason as was prevalent in the later utopias of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He did, however, influence the formulation of this genre because of the extensive borrowing from this text by the later generations of utopians. Because of this, it shares several characteristics with these ensuing texts. The main similarity being the use of this method criticising existing social structures by proposing an alternative social order comprehensible only to those who contain the capacity to discern the transcendental qualities and nature of Man's existence.

<sup>3</sup>Plato, *The Republic*. 2nd edition. trans. Desmond Lee. (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1974) Pg. 190 (424c). The correct size and characteristics of the city must be determined by the ruling class in its interpretation of a foreordained standard of unity. This is exemplified in Socrates' statement to Adeimantis: 'The state should, I think,' I replied, 'be allowed to grow so long as growth is compatible with unity, but no further.'

with the consent of the governing elite.<sup>4</sup> The individuals comprising this elite legislative class were to be known as the *Guardians* and would be selected from the slightly lower warrior class designated as the *Auxiliaries*. This second class was responsible for undertaking the duties involved in the policing and defence of the city.<sup>5</sup> The remainder of the inhabitants would comprise the lowest class taking part in the commercial, agricultural, and manufacturing activities of the commonwealth. The maintenance of this structure was to be controlled by a system of demotion and promotion also overseen by the *Guardians*.<sup>6</sup>

The various restrictive procedures within Plato's ideal community set about to fulfil a singular aim: the promotion of what the author considered a harmonious life. Plato felt such harmony and unity could exist within structures that were essentially stable, therefore, its laws and customs were designed to limit the potential for social discord within the community as a whole. To achieve this measure, the diversity of its inhabitants was purposely restricted because it was felt that such vicissitude was the underlying factor of social unrest.<sup>7</sup> Given this priority, the regulation of the potential for strife within the community was proposed to take place in three main areas.<sup>8</sup>

Firstly, within the economic realm, the removal of the possibility for the accumulation of excess wealth or the sinking into a condition of extreme poverty was to be eliminated through a forced equalisation process involving financial and material resources. This measure was designed to limit moral corruption stemming from excessive deprivation or jealousy from an excessive materialism.<sup>9</sup> A second area heavily regulated entailed the education of the commonwealth's inhabitants. This system sought to resist the potential for discontentment by limiting the prospects for innovative measures being created by its citizens. This was intended regulate the power of the intellectual and artistic circles of the society. Thus, within its curriculum, no new methodologies, theories or even recreational games were allowed at any

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., Pg. 206 (434c). 'Interference by the three classes with each other's jobs, and interchange of jobs between them, therefore, does the greatest harm to our state, and we are entirely justified in calling it the worst of evils.' This statement seems to rest on Plato's assumption that a 'just' state finds its proper foundation on each individual doing the occupation best suited to his or her nature.

<sup>5</sup>For Plato's explanation of the selection of the guardians, see: Pg. 177-178 (412b-415d); for the description of the qualities of these 'philosopher kings', Pg. 276-280 (484-487); and their education, Pg. 326-354 (521c-541b). For a description of the auxiliary class, their duties, and living standards, see Pg. 182-187 (415e-421c). The third class, comprised of merchants, professionals, and craftsmen is not described in length anywhere in the text. Of note though, is the fact that the members of this segment of the society were allowed to acquire a certain amount of material wealth, unlike the 'Auxiliaries' and the 'Guardians'.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., Pg. 236-243 (457c-461e) and Pg. 246-252 (462-466d).

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., Pg. 187-188 (421d-422a).

<sup>8</sup>Adi Ophir, *Plato's Invisible Cities: Power in the Republic*. (London: Routledge, 1991) Pg. 90.

<sup>9</sup>Plato, Pg. 187-188 (421d-422a).

time throughout an individual's education. Strict adherence to traditional concepts and ideas approved by the ruling elite was to be stressed, with individual thought or expression highly restricted.<sup>10</sup> Finally, within the legal system, the legislative body was to be elevated to the status of a quasi-religion.<sup>11</sup> By raising it to such a status, the possible emergence of political unrest amongst the members of the ruling class from the reinterpretation of the written laws was severely limited, thereby controlling the potential for unrest amongst the general population as well. This status was maintained through the ritualization of the activities of the governing class, who were to make sure any attempts at political variation had a severely limited chance of succeeding.

With the stringent regulation of these three realms, Plato's ideal state aspires to eliminate the uncertainty intrinsic to human endeavours of this nature. This characteristic of unpredictability arises from both the perpetual change contained within the surrounding world as well as the seemingly more irrational side of the psyche as embodied by human emotions. This project of reason seeks to discipline this more emotive side of human nature in order to regulate most of the conditions relating to this element of transcendental uncertainty. It is the depiction of a just society based on the notion of temperance, and it is this characteristic which connects it to other projects within the genre of utopianism. Thus, it addresses a perpetually recurrent theme within the tradition of utopian thought; speculation upon the most equitable division of power and resources within a communal structure. Accordingly, its answer rests on the premise that a harmonious state of existence can be maintained through the attribute of social stability. However, in reality such a state ignores a basic characteristic of existence, the constant fluctuation and transformation of the human condition due to its inherent temporality, and this central drawback, is found within a majority of the texts considered utopian.

### *I. The Dual Nature of Man*

The static perfection portrayed in *The Republic* illustrates an essential desire characteristic to Man: the need to overcome the element of *hazard* endemic to its existence. This is seemingly the central focus to the project, so much so that it excludes any possibility of a social diversity which could allow for the cultivation of various means of individual

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., Pg. 191-192 (424a-425a).

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., Pg. 238 (458c) and Pg. 181-182 (414c-415d) These statements describe Plato's conception of the 'Magnificent Myth' or what is commonly referred to as the 'Noble Lie.' This creation of a social tradition with mystical connotations sought to breed an unquestioning faith amongst the populace. In this way, a secular form of divine will was to be produced that legitimised the actions of the ruling class.



expression. Therefore, it succumbs to the tendency to over-emphasise the importance of this attribute to the detriment of another equally significant requirement of human nature: the need for creative expression embodied in the spirit of innovation.<sup>12</sup> This impulse finds its ground in the fundamental striving to define ones' existence in a uniquely creative manner. Though stability and security are both desirable and beneficial within social and political constructs, too much of these attributes can lead to a sterile one-dimensional existence.<sup>13</sup>

As a consequence of this, two recurrent faults within traditional utopian texts have fired the arguments of the anti-utopians. In regards to the first, Man's nature is essentially dualistic, comprised of one drive centred on innovation, change, and creative self-expression, and another, which desires security and stability within his inner subjective nature as well as the external environment.<sup>14</sup> The former impulse is driven by the persistent need to overcome the conditions of the present through creative action directed towards the realisation of his potential contained within the future, while the second seeks to manipulate its immediate surroundings in order to facilitate a sense of control and security. Consequently, the preceding drive is concerned with the instigation of change, with the following seeking to control and maintain the conditions of the present. Thus, many traditional utopian enterprises focus solely on this desire for stability, at the expense of Man's need for creative expression.

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<sup>12</sup>Bertrand Russell. *Authority and the Individual*. (London: Unwin Paperbacks Ltd., 1977) Pg. 68-69. Russell asserts that *some* of the qualities necessary to a community are essentially static, while others are of a more fluid and changing character. The elements important for the stability of the community are better controlled by a centralised governing structure like the one illustrated in Plato's text, while others which are of a more dynamic nature should be left to the initiative of certain individuals or groups. He correctly observes that; "A healthy and progressive society requires both a central control and individual and group initiative: without control there is anarchy, and without initiative there is stagnation." The rigidity of the social structures depicted in *The Republic* seem too centralised to allow such an equilibrium to occur.

<sup>13</sup>Russell, Pg. 70. "Security, though undoubtedly a good thing, may be sought excessively and become a fetish. A secure life is not necessarily a happy life; it may be rendered dismal by boredom and monotony." Such a statement highlights what many anti-utopians such as A. Huxley in *Brave New World* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1965) have traditionally criticised. Conformity can bring a certain stability, but too much tends to stifle the necessary human trait of individual self expression (as embodied by the character of the savage in Huxley's novel). Eventually, this will stagnate life within the community as a whole. Plato's commonwealth epitomises this mistake. It doesn't negate the validity of the utopian enterprise as many critics claim, but it does highlight the potential danger involved if such endeavours are conceived in too rigorous a fashion.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, Pg. 11-23. The author asserts that there are two instincts predominant within the psychological make-up of humans which have been present since the primary evolutionary stages of the species. One instinct is competitive and stems from the need to express ones uniqueness. It is embodied in our passions and activities in regards to art, sports, and heroic actions. If not properly channelled this instinct can potentially lead to violence or if ignored completely, apathy. The second is based on co-operation and is the crucial element in Man's ability to construct and maintain social relations. The satisfaction of both of these elements is imperative for human nature to be completely fulfilled.

A second mistake commonly found within the texts of utopian authors pertains to the failure to realise that the utopian endeavour is essentially a speculative act concerning the distribution of power within the social sphere. Consequently, the concept of utopia is therefore closely linked to power, making it easily manipulated by the interests in a position to exercise it. Generally, it is not the author of a utopia which has cynical intentions, but the political contingents seeking to implement its proposals. This factor points to another connection between power and utopia, given that the latter is dependent on the praxis of power for the implementation of its visions. Without this, the utopian endeavour must remain a sideline fantasy instead of a mechanism of change within the social structure. Therefore, it is through this connection that the vision of the utopian can acquire an influence over the formation of social and political institutions, but this same link also allows such conceptions to be cynically manipulated in order to usurp individual autonomy.

Hence, it is the interplay between these two characteristics intrinsic to Man's nature that have a direct influence on the configuration of his social and political structures. To fully comprehend the potential capacity of the utopian endeavour in influencing such formations, Man's proclivity to envision an idealised future (the utopian impulse) must be evaluated in relation to the implicit desire to dominate the constituent components comprising his surroundings (the impulse to power). It is the interaction which drives the cyclical process of social transformation relating to the ascent or descent of cultures. This relationship is indicative of the human capacity to inhabit a realm between the reality of the objective world and the mental images produced by the faculty of the imagination which informs his actions. For the constitution of a free society, neither characteristic must supersede the other in importance, nor can either be fully understood in isolation.

This interrelation of the forces contains the capacity to effect the human condition implicitly at every level, from the metaphysical to the cultural. As Fred Polak illustrates in his description of the forces involved in the process of cultural renewal: "Man's dualism is thus the indispensable prerequisite to the movements in time, and to the dynamics of historical change."<sup>15</sup> Given this, social changes that result in key cultural alterations or historical upheavals are directly related to the formulation of the ideals and values depicting the future as the human will desires it to be. They influence humanity's attempts at a purposeful intervention that seeks to influence the configuration of its surroundings and become manifest in the form of transitive changes to Man's social institutions.

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<sup>15</sup>Fred Polak, *The Image of The Future*. (Amsterdam: Elsevier Scientific Publishing Company, 1973) Pg. 2.



Consequently, contrary to many prevalent beliefs, the theories of a social visionary, such as the utopian, can therefore acquire a position of influence on an existing power structure as an impetus for significant events of social transformation. Similarly, the actions undertaken by such a structure in the implementation of these ideals simultaneously projects, sustains, and reinforces their value conceptions within a society. Therefore, to understand the social dynamics of Mankind's civilisations, the attributes of power and utopia must be studied within their mutual context, which involves the formative process of the social structures that define the human condition.

## *II. The Paradoxical Potential of This Duality*

If these forces maintain a relationship of equally balanced influence beneficial changes can be instigated within a culture, but if it becomes disproportionate, potentially disruptive cultural devices can be unleashed causing social violence and unrest. A central problem with the value conceptualisations produced by the visionary is that there is no control over the magnitude of the changes brought about by them or the method in which they are implemented. This factor allows certain political factions to utilise such visions to mask their drive for the acquisition of power until they reach a dominant position or for a group seeking to maintain such a position. In the event that a predominant ruling party of an existing social condition appropriates such imagery as a means to an end based solely on its own interests, such imagery betrays the very ideals it claims to represent. It serves only to disguise the machinations of power instead of producing values seeking to influence existing social structures benevolently. When utilised in this manner, horrific events such as war, revolution, and systematic violence can be legitimised under the veil of necessary action towards the manifestation of a social and political ideal.

Such potential necessitates an understanding of the interaction of the forces underlying power and utopia, if a recurrence of some of the tragic events contained within the history of human civilisation is to be avoided.<sup>16</sup> With the advent of modern technology, it is no longer

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<sup>16</sup>Two of the most infamous events of this nature have been within the twentieth century, largely due to the spread of the utilisation of political propaganda facilitated by the proliferation of the mass media. Such methods allow political groups and figures an avenue towards capitalising on the implicit desires contained within the communal psyche of a population. A good example of such actions was embodied in the policies of the National Socialist Party in Germany before and during World War II which manipulated the population into undertaking actions of wide-spread social violence and war while simultaneously producing campaigns of propaganda describing the benefits brought about by its rule (See chapter VI of this text). Similarly, in the Soviet Union, under Stalin's government, images of the virtuous equality of the 'workers state' were projected to the mass population, while his tyrannical regime

possible to ignore even the most seemingly far-fetched of visions, because the rapid change which accompanies it makes prediction concerning the future increasingly difficult. In light of these factors, this study will endeavour to understand the implications surrounding the interaction of power and utopia in order to ascertain a better comprehension of potential circumstances it can generate. Through an analysis emphasising the necessity and importance of the connection of these forces to the formation and subsequent transformation of the ideological superstructure of a society, the causal circumstances surrounding many modern social maladies could be ascertained. Similarly, such knowledge can aid in the propagation and implementation of visions which can have positive effects on the social edifices of men. Given this, the overriding question to be addressed will be: What is the intrinsic connection between the forces underlying the concepts of power and utopia, and how does this interaction affect the human condition?

In approaching this question, the exploration of many of the implications surrounding it will be undertaken in three sections. Within the first, an exploration of the complex issues surrounding the definition and clarification of the fundamental nature of each concept will be undertaken. This will provide the groundwork for the creation of working definitions that will inform subsequent analysis concerning the effects that such a relationship can have on the internal machinations of a society. In the case of utopia, traditionally contentious issues concerning the validity, meaning and characteristics of its endeavour will be examined to uncover its potential as a method of social and political criticism. Similarly, the concept of power will be investigated in an effort to discover its essential attributes relating to the notion of capacity, its manifestation as a social phenomenon, and its implicit associations with violence, authority, and coercion.

Following from this, the second section of the study will outline the issues involved in the interrelationship of these concepts and their effect upon the varying facets defining the Man's existence. This procedure will attempt to uncover its potential impact on the formation and machinations of the political and cultural structures of human societies, its influence on our perceptions of the past, as well as the role it has in defining the unique characteristics of the individuals comprising these structures. The final section will set out to clarify certain central philosophical issues such as the arguments for freewill and determinism, the role of ideals in defining existence, and the intrinsic relationship between the freedom of expression and the discipline demanded by the community in relation to the concepts of power and utopia. It is at

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systematically killed, tortured, and imprisoned, countless thousands of individuals during its reign of terror.

this point that the question serving as the driving force behind this study can be singularly addressed. Through an understanding of the influence of the interaction of these forces, the construction of abstract social and political paradigms can be undertaken which are open to utilisation as informative tools of criticism. In this way, the potential of this interaction of forces may then be capitalised upon, while averting some of its potentially negative aspects. Towards this end, our study will now embark upon an analysis of the issues surrounding the utopian endeavour.

*Book I: The Essential Characteristics of Power and Utopia.*

## Chapter I:

### *On Utopia*

The concept of "Utopia" has been a prevalent force in the civilising process of Man since the birth of western civilisation within the culture of the ancient Greeks.<sup>1</sup> Traditionally, such descriptions focus on an attempt to visualise a society that is benevolent by nature and corresponds to a situation ideally suited to the cultivation of its inhabitants' material and spiritual needs. In a majority of the cases, such speculation expounds a doctrine of perfection, where Mankind can overcome the vices and hardships of its present context in order to reach a higher plateau of existence, either within the future or in some other geographic location. Its discourse emphasises certain qualities within human nature closely connected to its dreams and desires, and it is these qualities which serve as the foundation for its perpetual appeal.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Frank and Fritzie P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979) Pg. 1. As the authors point out, there has been a utopian "propensity" within cultures as diverse as the savage Guarani tribe in Brazil and the cargo-cults of Asia and Africa, to the highly civilised societies of the Japanese, the Hindus, and the Arabs. However, the influx of such conceptions has been unparalleled within the tradition of Western thought.

<sup>2</sup>See Isaiah Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991) Pg. 20. Berlin asserts that utopias are satirical devices designed to criticise those in power or those willingly succumbing to the elite's edicts and machinations. He claims that there are several consistent elements contained within this tradition. Such speculative devices usually envision a society in a state of pure harmony, where all are at peace. Further, all inhabitants are free from the burden of physical danger,

Ironically, it is this same striving for perfection, that is one of the central points generating much of the criticism directed towards it. Given the obscurity of the essential characteristics of human nature, many intellectual circles perceive utopian literature as depicting circumstances which are closed, impractical, or merely fanciful. Such critics claim these imaginative descriptions merely propagate myths, and therefore contain no more significance within the reality of Man's existence than a piece of literary fiction. This position is a crystallisation of a number of disciplines or attitudes within political philosophy, social theory, and other intellectual traditions, and commonly denoted as *anti-utopianism*. This strain of criticism has been prevalent for as long as there has been speculation concerning the conditions of an ideal commonwealth.<sup>3</sup> Much of this negativity emerges as a result of the ambivalent manner in which a majority of utopias are presented. This is due largely to the fact that the utopian message can be found within a wide variety of literary methods or descriptions, and it is this multi-disciplinary approach which makes its true intentions difficult to ascertain.

What is generally considered the literary genre of utopian thought was formalised by Sir Thomas More in 1516 with his presentation of the word "utopia" which utilised the expression in its title.<sup>4</sup> More drew this word from the Latin root *topia*, which can have several meanings ranging from, 'nowhere' (*outopia*), to 'somewhere good' (*eutopia*).<sup>5</sup> This 'no place', was considered by More to be imaginary in geographic terms, but nonetheless existed within the realm of possibility. He purposely maintained the ambivalent and fantastic nature with a literary structure resembling a fable as well as utilising differing devices with subversive meanings such as naming the narrator *Hythloday* (Another Greek term meaning 'distributor of, or expert in nonsense'.<sup>6</sup>) These devices had a dramatic effect in regards to capturing the imagination of the reader and provided an excellent platform for covertly criticising the contemporary social context. However, this inadvertently aided in propagating the conception that utopia was concerned with merely illustrating fantasies and not a serious form of political speculation or criticism.<sup>7</sup>

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envy, frustration, material needs, insecurity, or injustice of any kind. Moreover, due to this fact and as was shown in the case of Plato's *Republic*, they tend to be intellectually inert because after reaching such a state of perfection, the necessity for change or innovation is eliminated. Therefore, utopia is traditionally conceived as a situation where all human needs and desires are perpetually fulfilled.

<sup>3</sup>For a classic example; see Aristotle, *The Politics*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

<sup>4</sup>See Sir Thomas More, *Utopia*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

<sup>5</sup>More, Pg. xi.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., Pg. 112 - 113. Here, More discusses the advantages of such devices in a letter to his friend, Peter Giles.



Coupled with this, is the perception that the measures depicted by the utopia can contain the possibility of influencing great changes within a society, but such changes would not bring the paradise generally envisioned. This position charges that most of the utopian assumptions concerning human nature rest on narrow *a priori* conceptions of the "good", and contain underlying authoritarian tones that are essentially antagonistic to the values of societies where the rights of the individual are considered paramount.<sup>8</sup> An attempt to carry out these proposals would inevitably lead to tyrannical state apparatus whose holistic approach incorporating radical social change repressive and potentially violent actions.

There are several arguments whose points of departure rest on this view, but whose agendas are radically different.<sup>9</sup> Arguably, the most prominent of these critiques is presented by Karl Popper.<sup>10</sup> In his argument against the *a priori* rationale of utopian engineering, Popper contrasts this method with a piece-meal approach to social reform he claims to be more sympathetic to a liberal society. This trial and error procedure of observation and refinement, is asserted to be the true techniques of science in regards to social reform, contrary to the utopian social engineers' claims that it is their methods that are scientifically based. To Popper, the utopian method serves as a disguise the individual attempting to play the role of a Deity utilising a knowledge that is both imperfect and incomplete.<sup>11</sup> It has an illicit agenda which seeks to indoctrinate its inhabitants by imposing a personalised view of the "common good" on a community which is instigated through the "wiping clean"<sup>12</sup> of the existing slate. By claiming to know the essential traits of human nature and the proposals that have the potential to mould a society which corresponds to them, this technique actually ignores each individual's need for self-expression. And by ignoring this requirement, the utopian social reformer ignores the warning contained within the phrase, "one man's dream is another man's nightmare."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Barbara Goodwin and Keith Taylor, *The Politics of Utopia: A Study in Theory and Practice*. (London: Hutchinson, 1982) Pg. 93.

<sup>9</sup>Goodwin and Taylor, Pg. 92.

<sup>10</sup>See Karl Popper, Vol. I, Pg. 157-169. For examples of other similar arguments within this tradition, See: J. L. Talmon. *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*. (Praeger, 1960) Pg. 2-7. Talmon stresses the need for pluralistic institutional experimentation. Also, F. Hayek. 'The Principles of a Liberal Social Order' in *Ideologies of Politics*. Ed. by A. Crespigny and J. Cronin. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), for an explication on the possibility of acquiring truly free and spontaneous societal parameters in the form of a *Catallaxy*. This view is based on theories first expounded by John Locke and later refined by Adam Smith in his theory of the "invisible hand" process.

<sup>11</sup>Goodwin and Taylor, Pg. 94.

<sup>12</sup>For a classic example of this form of reasoning and one directly relating to Popper's attack, see Plato; Pg. 263-264 (501a-502a).

<sup>13</sup>Margaret Mead, "Towards More Vivid Utopias", in *Utopia*. George Kateb. (New York: Atherton Press, 1971) Pg. 44.



Through the example of Popper's argument<sup>14</sup>, one can see that within this group of writers, there is an inherent distrust of any individual seeking to bring about changes within a society that are beyond their immediate concerns or those holding theoretical positions whose primary intention is the undertaking of radical social actions that are guided by a singular rationale. The main thrust of this position seems to be directed against viewing society as an artefact which can be shaped through theoretical speculation treating it as an organic whole. Any attempt to undertake such an action is doomed to failure because it is founded on a closed and static mentality. In certain circumstances, such accusations may have been valid criticisms, but can it be legitimately claimed that this is always the case with *any* form of utopian speculation? Does such activity necessarily lead to the loss of individual freedom and the creation of tyrannical regimes? If utopianism were viewed from a different perspective, could it not bring a different result from the one the Liberal tradition claims as inevitable?

Admittedly, it is not difficult to envision why such concerns arise, and there are several pivotal events where a depiction of an ideal society has been utilised to facilitate some twisted vision of reality.<sup>15</sup> However, these rather limited cases do not seem to provide sufficient grounds for the *complete* disqualification of the utopian endeavour. As is the case with most forms of human action, utopianism might best be described as a double-edged sword. Certain utopian visions, if carried out dogmatically could cause a great deal of harm to the very societies they hope to benefit. The converse might be possible if such measures were incorporated in a less extensive or radical manner. If utopian proposals are seen to be stringent guidelines for the total reconstruction of a society 'over-night', then the criticism of the anti-utopians will always be well founded. If, however, such measures are considered differently, for example as a device intended to raise the social and political awareness of a society, then definite benefits could be derived from its discourse. If this were to be the case, it would be imprudent to ignore its conjectures prematurely<sup>16</sup>.

In this role, the utopian mentality could contain the ability to rejuvenate certain values long dormant within the communal psyche of a society. By seeking to focus on a limited range of clearly depicted ideals, there could be an immense gain in the clarification of issues pertaining

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<sup>14</sup>For an in-depth analysis of the tradition of *Anti-utopian* thought; See George Kateb, *Utopia and its Enemies*. (London: Collier-Macmillan group, 1963).

<sup>15</sup>Goodwin and Taylor, Pg. 93. Goodwin notes that several writers within this tradition were directly affected by the activities of the Nazis and therefore tended to exaggerate the virtues of liberalism. Others holding alternative political views, as was the case with the anarchist writer, Marie Louise Berneri in the introduction of her book, *Journey Through Utopia* (London: Freedom Press, 1982) Pgs. 1-9., criticised from the standpoint of specific political agendas.

<sup>16</sup>Goodwin and Taylor, Pg. 20.

to the attainment of such values. This obsession with certain specific values which is so heavily criticised by the liberal theorists is the very trait which allows the utopian to spurn populist trends in an effort to reinforce certain values even if it risks conflicting with the ideologies comprising the political conditions of the present.<sup>17</sup> Akin to this, and perhaps of a greater importance, is the fact that the utopian has the capacity to introduce completely new value conceptions with the potential to transform these ideologies. Such a dialogue may start as a minor reaction to some social irritant in intensity and resolution until it incites actions which have extreme ramifications throughout society.<sup>18</sup> It is these abilities that allow the utopian method to uncover certain issues that may have been overlooked by the predominant discourse at the time attracting the attention of the battling ideologies contained within its social structure.

Given this potential, a sympathetic view towards the project of utopia is proposed in order to explore its capacity as a methodology for informing the social imagination in regards to the possible future configurations of its institutional structures. To better understand the parameters involved in such a proposition, one must explore several attributes of utopianism that would permit the connection between social theory and practice to be made explicitly, thus avoiding many of the hidden agendas prevalent in other forms of political theory and praxis.<sup>19</sup> Utopia has the inherent capacity in gaining a beneficial distance in which to overcome the compromised situations befalling most other political philosophies to produce paradigms that can serve as valuable tools for the analysis of its surrounding social and political context. Vital to the clarification of these powers of analysis, is the examination of its ability to simultaneously anticipate future possibilities through criticism directed towards its surrounding conditions. It is this aspect which allows the dismantling of certain defence mechanisms, to offer a more vivid depiction of the internal relations of a society as well as projecting its possible future organisation.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, the censure directed towards its methods, in regards to its being either a literary device producing compensatory fantasies or a guise for concealing totalitarian intentions, must be overcome. To counter such reproaches, this chapter will set out to explore the notion of *possibility* surrounding many of utopia's predominant proposals, its range of possible manifestations, and a possible methodology for its practical application within the sphere of social and political thought. By exploring such parameters, it may be possible to understand

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<sup>17</sup>H. J. N. Horsburgh, "The Relevance of the Utopian" in *Ethics*, Volume LXVII, 1956-57. Pg. 136.

<sup>18</sup>Horsburgh, Pg. 137.

<sup>19</sup>Goodwin and Taylor, Pg. 9.

<sup>20</sup>Horsburgh, P. 135, Goodwin and Taylor, Pg. 26-27.

the essential nature of utopian thought in reference to its positive attributes. Such an exploration will coincide with the spirit of the statement made by Bertolt Brecht in defence of his radio theory: "If you deem all of this utopian, I beg you to reflect on the reason which renders it utopian."<sup>21</sup>

### *Utopian Thought and the Notion of Possibility*

In addressing the first issue, it is imperative to explore the various issues surrounding the notion of possibility. Most critics holding that utopia is pure fantasy, see its method as proposing social policies and situations which are impossible to attain and thus it would be imprudent to expend any effort in attempting to bring them into practice. This view originates from two predominant misconceptions; one concerning the contingent and transient nature of *possibility*, while the other stems from the ambivalence and confusion surrounding most utopian discourse due to the multi-disciplinary approach of portraying its subject matter.

Regarding the first conception, it is imperative to examine the conditions generally implied when something is described as being either *possible* or *impossible*. In terms of its common conception, the attribute of possibility, is judged by a rather rigid and dogmatic criteria. According to its broad definition, something or some situation is said to be *possible* if it is 'capable of existing or happening; that may be managed, achieved, etc.'<sup>22</sup> The converse of this, *impossible*, describes a circumstance or element which is 'not possible; that cannot occur, exist, or be done'.<sup>23</sup> At a fundamental level, there is a direct connection between these words resting on the fact that they are opposite in meaning. In our everyday use, if something is said to be impossible, it can't be possible, and vice versa.

However, as is generally the case with subtle and complex issues, things which seem to imply a straight-forward state of affairs, are rarely as simple as they first appear, with this situation being no exception. Closely intertwined with our ideas possibility are the concepts of practical and impractical.<sup>24</sup> Within our common use of the terms, the latter concepts seem to

<sup>21</sup>From a translated statement found in Darko Suvin, "Locus, Horizon, and Orientation: The Concept of Possible Worlds as a Key to Utopian Studies", *Utopia E Modernita*. Vol. I., Ed by Giuseppa Saccarro Del Buffa & Arthur O. Lewis. (Roma: Gangemi Editore, 1989) Pg. 64. For the original statement, see Bertolt Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. XVIII. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973) Pg. 30.

<sup>22</sup>R.E. Allen, ed. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*. 8th edition. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) Pg. 930.

<sup>23</sup>Allen, Pg. 593.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., Pg. 935. According to its definition, a *practical* measure is more inclined to action than speculation, or is designed mainly to fulfil a specific function. In connection with the notion of

become confused with, or assimilated into the discourse concerning the idea of possibility. The notion of practicality is actually only loosely related and brings qualitative factors into the formula that only serve to obscure the central issues. In reality, all their meanings are dependent on several factors and change periodically in relation to transformations in tense and temporal circumstance. To ascertain the relative validity of the argument that most utopian proposals are impractical, or impossible to attain, it is important to comprehend the transient forms such ideas can embody as well as the contingent nature of the factors upon which they are dependent.

### *I. The Varying Notions of Possibility.*

Generally a state-of-affairs can become manifest in one of several forms or possibilities. In regards to this, there are three categories of possibility which describe such potential; *logical*, *empirical*, and *technical*. In the first, a situation or event is determined to be logically possible, if the proposition behind the materialisation of its inherent conditions is not self-contradictory. If such a proposition is found to be the opposite, then it is naturally assumed to be logically impossible.<sup>25</sup> One of the classical examples used to describe the logic behind this concept is the case of the 'square circle'<sup>26</sup>. Such a condition can never become manifest because according to its definition, a circle is a shape which does not have four equal sides. To describe it as such, implies that it has four sides which correlates to the definition of a square. Hence, if we say that a circle has four sides, then it is not a circle, it is by definition a square. Following from this then, the conception of such a shape is logically impossible because the proposition of the existence of such a state is self-contradictory. Due to the incoherence pertaining to its internal logic, it could not be possible even if the circumstances surrounding its description were to change. For this proposition to become feasible, its intrinsic structural logic must be transformed.

Coupled with this notion of logical possibility is a second category which describes similar issues in the *empirical* sense.<sup>27</sup> Regarding this sense of possibility, it could be the case that a man could run the distance of a mile in under one minute utilising only his given muscular

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possibility, when the term *practical* utilised, it tends to influence those involved into perceiving certain propositions not directly realisable in the short term, as not possible at all. In reality, something can be very possible to manifest, but due to the difficulty of such an undertaking, may not be very practical.

<sup>25</sup>John Hospers, *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis*. 2nd. edition. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1967) Pg. 170.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.



strength. Though at present, this seems a bizarre and fantastic statement, it is not a *logical impossibility*, but it could be deemed *empirically* so. Possibility in the empirical sense centres on the concept that for a state-of-affairs to have the possibility of actually occurring, conditions vital to its occurrence cannot contradict the laws governing the natural forces found within the world. In light of this, it may be the case that a man could cover the distance of a mile in under one minute, but it seems strange at the moment because such an event has never been witnessed. Therefore, it is natural to assume that such an event couldn't take place. This proposition is not self-contradictory as in the case of the 'square circle', so it is possible in the *logical* sense. Given this, one can't assume that it is absolutely impossible even in the *empirical* sense. This is largely due to the fact that though the laws of nature are constant, humanity's perception and understanding of them is perpetually changing.

Consequently, there is a temporal aspect that must be addressed when gauging the possibility of a situation being manifested. Mankind's perception of the natural laws of the universe change as time passes and our technical capabilities develop further. Just a little over a century ago, the prevalent perception was that it was impossible for man to journey to the moon. This was due to the fact that the collective knowledge of the natural laws concerning aerodynamics at the time was more limited than at present. During this period, if a person proposed the scenario of a man climbing into a small metallic container and being rocketed to the moon, this individual would have been considered foolish, impractical, or possibly insane. In reality, such an event was possible because taking flight in does not actually contradict the laws of nature. Hence, notions involving empirical possibility are not static and are susceptible to transformation as Man's perception and knowledge of the inherent composition of the world evolves.<sup>28</sup>

The final category of possibility also transforms from one historical circumstance to another. It differs from the empirical notion of possibility because it the direct manipulation of the laws of Nature to bring about circumstances which were not attainable in previous epochs. Returning to the example of space travel, more than a century ago it was actually *empirically* possible for Mankind to journey to the moon, but not actually *technically* so.<sup>29</sup> This circumstance arose because civilisation at the time did not contain the technology to achieve such an event. It is extremely hard to speculate on such possibilities because Man's power for inventiveness seems endless, and the temporal effect on the notion of possibility involves such complex sets of variables that ruling out any event containing a measure of rationality may be

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Hospers, Pg. 171.

found in error at some later date. However, if a proposal is discovered to be logically impossible, it is not possible in the other categories as well because no amount of technical prowess or temporal passage can bring about such a proposal. A proposal of this nature must be transformed from within its own internal logic<sup>30</sup>.

When analysing utopian thought in reference to these notions of possibility, a further category must be included. This category focuses on the relative potential for political proposals to be manifested within the social structure of a society. For such a proposal to be implemented, it must gain support amongst those who can wield the greatest influence upon public opinion.<sup>31</sup> To the political realist or pragmatist, if a policy proposal is to have any serious chance of advancing through a society's political apparatus, it must contain measures within its structure that will allow it to build the necessary advocacy for implementation. Any proposal that does not address such conditions contains little chance of becoming policy and thus, is considered barren of any real political potential.

For the 'realist', to gain the needed advocacy, a proposition must be acceptable to a large majority of a society, or at least to the ruling body of an influential political party. If this cannot be achieved or seems unattainable in the short term, then this individual will generally claim that the proposal is unable to utilise the political process, ultimately meaning it has no possibility of achieving its true aim. If this is the case, it is not a serious proposal, but merely a political fantasy. Any attempt made in regards to suggesting its execution is an exercise in futility. Therefore, the realist argument against what it terms as idealist or utopian proposals rests more on their inability to excite the *status-quo* of the power structure, rather than their inherent merit or actual feasibility. By claiming such conditions disqualify these types of proposals from serious consideration, the realist is arguing on the grounds that a proposal is a *political impossibility*.

## II. *The Implications of Possibility on the Utopian Endeavour.*

In reviewing the four categories outlined above in regards to utopian thought, the large majority of theories found within this discipline seem to contain an internally coherent logic

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid. The author emphasises this distinction in another way; If a concept is logically impossible, it would be so in any universe, but if it is empirically so, then it might be the case that in *some* universe other than the one where the proposition is made, it can occur. Also, when the assertion is made that something is logically possible, it does not mean that it is going to or can happen. It means that if such an occurrence was asserted to have happened or could take place, it would not be a self-contradictory statement, though it may very well be a false.

<sup>31</sup>Horsburgh, Pg. 128.

and can therefore be *logically possible*. In order to achieve the necessary distance from the social circumstances it seeks to criticise, the organisation of a utopia must have all of its intrinsic components compatible in order to produce a congruent structure. Consequently, the criticism of utopia projecting conditions impossible to achieve seems to relate more to notions of *empirical* rather than *logical* possibility. A majority of these critiques rest on assertions that many utopian propositions are actually contrary to the natural laws concerning human nature<sup>32</sup>. In reality, many more are seemingly compatible with them, but since such circumstances have never been observed before, they are taken as impossible to manifest.<sup>33</sup> Thus, these allegations rely on misconceptions that repress certain tendencies which could produce an atmosphere conducive to social and political experimentation. Hence, many policies attempting the transformation of existing conditions seem to be prematurely abandoned under the false pretences of their political futility.

When examining the feasibility of certain notions contained within utopian thought it would be useful to construct a criteria utilising the concepts of possibility that could serve to separate descriptions which are possible in the *logical* and *empirical* sense from those conceptions which are truly fantasy or science fiction. Utopias containing mythical creatures or humans with supernatural traits, could then be distinguished from those that are more serious attempts at describing situations having the potential to instigate social and political change. Clear insight into these conditions could help to clarify certain prevalent types of utopian thought and alleviate much of the contention surrounding the issue of its political importance by indicating which utopias are relevant politically and those which should be labelled fantasy.<sup>34</sup>

Upon making such distinctions, one could then proceed to the *technical* and *political* criteria of possibility for a greater clarification of a propositions capacity to serve as valid form of political theory. In light of such standards, the pragmatism of the anti-utopian's viewpoint could be considered a valid criticism for any pronouncement concerning the efficacy of purpose that an advocate of the utopian methodology may attempt to make. However, when considered from the opposing viewpoint, this apparent setback can become a positive force

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<sup>32</sup>L. Kolakowski, 'The Death of Utopia Reconsidered' in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values 4*. ed. by S. M. McMurrin. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) Pg. 238. See also Krishan Kumar, *Utopianism*. (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991) Pg. 90. For an account of human nature based on a concept of possessive individualism, see C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966).

<sup>33</sup>For examples and an in-depth discussion of utopia's connection with history, see; Arthur E. Morgan, *Nowhere was Somewhere: How History Makes Utopias and How Utopias Make History*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1946). See especially, the appendix; Pg. 187-212.

<sup>34</sup>Goodwin and Taylor, Pg. 29.



connected to the importance of vision and foresight within the formative process of a society or community.

The 'dreamers' envisioning mankind's impending flight to the moon more than a hundred years ago actually led the way for more practical minded men with a greater technological aptitude to modify and refine the ideas underlying such inspiration. The outcome of this activity was the creation of a mode of transportation that has allowed humanity to achieve heights of technical achievement beyond the wildest imaginations of the time. It may have taken a considerable amount of time to succeed in fulfilling such visions, but their attainment has stimulated human civilisation to strive towards further advancement in regards to its technical capacity.

The task of a visionary is an arduous one which demands the discarding of many of the prevalent beliefs held within his or her lifetime. Such anticipation is imperative to the advancement of civilisation, so the visions of innovators are moulded into the goals or objectives that the technically prolific strive to materialise. There is an intrinsic notion of temporal passage involved in this process which can afford the potential for some visions, once seemingly impossible, to become manifest. With the notion of technical possibility, the attribute of change must be taken into account when declaring an idea invalid in relation to transformations in our understanding and manipulation of Nature.

If a utopian proposal surmounts or overcomes all the conditions contained within the first three notions of possibility, the fourth circumstance must then be addressed given its particular capacity as a criterion towards discerning the true relevance of the utopian method. The political pragmatist's argument is seemingly based on a misguided notion that political expediency is the sole standard of measure regarding social reform. The inaccuracy of such a position is exhibited in two ways. Firstly, it is possible for a movement or proposal not capable of acquiring the needed support in its own right, to influence or spawn other proposals which could be successfully implemented by another group at a later time.<sup>35</sup> Throughout history there have been instances where certain groups have failed to win support for their immediate social context or epoch, but their theories inspired later generations who sought to overcome similar problems. The connection to the transformation of public opinion within the political arena<sup>36</sup> emphasises the risk involved in discarding certain ideas or proposals because

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<sup>35</sup>Horsburgh, Pg. 130.

<sup>36</sup>Such common sayings as, "A day is an eternity in politics....", are indicative of the tempestuous nature of the political sphere in its dependence on public opinion.

of an immediate lack of support and highlights the important influence that the political fringe can wield.<sup>37</sup>

Secondly, the political pragmatist's argument for advocacy as a determining factor in the validity of a concept or idea is short-sighted because it overlooks the variegated time spans needed to fulfil the various agendas within this sphere. Policies proposed by the ruling parties at the epicentre of the arena (Those most directly influential in the political process.), have as their central concern the maintenance of their powerbase. Such groups cannot afford to risk objectives that might prove to be unpopular and are forced to adopt policies that can be implemented in a relatively short span of time.<sup>38</sup> This differs greatly from the time frame involved for groups at the periphery of the political arena who have the luxury of holding ideals that may not be completely acceptable to the greater population. As one moves from the centre of the power structure to more radical positions at its fringes, the indulgence in innovative agendas that propose more extensive and long-term changes becomes more prevalent. Consequently, the luxury of time is not available for those groups which must deal with the day to day pragmatics of governing.

After examining these various categories of possibility, the accusation of the unfeasibility of a majority of utopian endeavours seems not to be as potentially damaging as most critics assert. Temporal spans, technological processes, and turbulent political conditions, make speculation towards the practicality of such policies difficult. Given the complexity of the issues surrounding the idea of possibility, many utopian proposals that have been described as fiction, may after the passage of time or a change in public opinion been considered feasible. As a result, to relinquish certain innovative ideas because they differ from the conventional wisdom of the time has a greater chance of creating detrimental effects than avoiding them.

True visionary proposals of great merit cannot be judged solely on their potential for drawing support within the social context of their conception. If a vision can be proved *logically impossible*, then there is a good case for its dismissal as fiction. If it is proved to be *empirically, technologically, or politically impossible*, then serious analysis must go towards determining what potential effects time and public opinion could have on such proposals before their true potential can be accurately assessed. Within the context of the preceding discussion one aspect seems apparent, the traditional grounds for criticism of the utopian endeavour

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<sup>37</sup>Refer to chapter 5 of this text regarding the notion of the geography and the temporal span of the political arena. A good example of a fringe group which wields large amounts of influence within the politics of many European and North American nations is the "green" movement which has gained importance over the last several years.

<sup>38</sup>Horsburgh, Pg. 133.

which rely on a narrow conception of possibility are seemingly in more cases than not, wide of the mark. In light of these conclusions, it would seem that the critique of utopia as projecting impossible conditions and containing no potential bearing on the social or political realm is in need of reassessment.

### ***The Content, Form, and Functional Characteristics of Utopian Thought.***

Another contributing factor to the perception surrounding the reputation of utopian thought as being a literary device of fantasy, is the ambivalent manner in which it describes its theories and the wide range of literary vehicles used to illustrate them. This is due largely to utopia's traditional emergence in a variety of disciplines including, politics, art, architecture, sociology, history, and philosophy.<sup>39</sup> Historically, utopian writers have utilised fictive devices to shroud critical intentions in an effort to shield themselves from political persecution. Such occurrences have compounded the problem of identifying the intrinsic object of its investigation and the central issues involved in its approach. This has inevitably led to a wide range of interpretations involving the intentions of such authors and has fuelled debates concerning which aspects should be included within the boundaries of utopian thought *proper*.

The arguments concerning such a topic are too extensive for the scope of this chapter, so the discussion will be limited to more general issues which outline its more predominate topics and can guide the discussion to the central notions contained within the impulse to, and the actions involved in, envisioning ideal social configurations. It will be especially directed towards those methods which could encapsulate ideas adept at indicating where certain beneficial alterations to existing social and political structures might take place. In relation to this aim, there seem to be three characteristics which various commentators utilise in an attempt to forge a definition of utopia encompassing all of its potential manifestations. The notions of *content*, *form*, and *function*,<sup>40</sup> appear to be consistent categories prevalent in attempts to define the predominant components and purposes of this genre of thought. The description of these categories should not be considered as rigid classifications expounding a universal definition, but loose groupings that serve to clarify certain features relevant to utopia's potential utilisation as a constructive analytical tool.

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<sup>39</sup>R. Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia*. (New York: Phillip Allan, 1990) Pg. 156.

<sup>40</sup>Levitas. Pg. 161-172.

The first of these categories, *content*, involves the assumption that a utopia is a depiction of a common 'good' illustrated in the form of a 'good society'. Such depictions usually vary depending on the concerns of the individual or group that imagined them. Thus, differing images can emerge from competing groups within a society or consistent images can arise from groups or persons inhabiting completely different historical periods. This bestows the characteristic of fluidity upon this notion similar to quick silver, thereby making it difficult to contain theoretically. However, a majority of the ideals projected within the history of western thought habitually seek to surmount the 'scarcity gap', or the disparate conditions between the needs or desires of its inhabitants and the society's ability to supply them.<sup>41</sup>

This aspect is considered the most interesting by many commentators because it solicits speculation on the potential of attaining such situations as well as the actual desirability of doing so. Issues prevalent in such discourse are generally concerned with the perfectibility of Mankind, the feasibility of the ideals, and the clarification of features or situations involved in attempts at realising such idealisations. Order and perfection concerning the total structuring of a society are therefore defining attributes in the classification of a utopia in terms of its *content*. The history of this endeavour is categorised by its approach towards solving the problems involved in the collectivisation of individuals through a method of envisioning a perfectly ordered and co-operative environment.<sup>42</sup> Such visions tend to contain normative and evaluative characteristics specifically stating what such a 'good society' *should* or *ought* to be, instead of objectively speculating on the various potentials involved in its actual social and political surroundings.

It is this steadfast attention to a singular conception, while ignoring other potential attributes, which causes many critics to question the real intent behind such depictions. Issues such as the wide-spread variation of theme within the traditional body of dialogue concerning utopia's 'content proper' and the actual feasibility of its proposals highlight the complicated issues surrounding the quest for a universal definition which can incorporate all of its traditional characteristics. This complexity tends to obscure any clarity that a definition of such endeavours by their content could bring to the subject. So, instead of clarifying matters, the notion of content tends to propagate the view that utopian conditions relates only to the imagination.

Supporters of this method of classification often point out that our notions of the possible are socially conditioned, and due to the prevalence of such depictions within the tradition of

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<sup>41</sup>J.C. Davis, *Utopia and the Ideal Society*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) Pg. 19. Cited in Levitas, Pg. 161.

<sup>42</sup>Davis, Pg. 39., Levitas, Pg. 164.



western thought, the theories contained within utopia must be, at least in part, realistic. This position is based on the notion that humanity's perception changes and evolves in regards to its understanding of reality, so its influence must be constantly re-evaluated and the characteristic of *content* within utopian thought is considered the essential interpretative element having the capacity to achieve this. Actually, though evaluation of this endeavour in terms of its content is helpful in addressing certain issues within particular historical contexts, it tends only to add to the latent ambivalence surrounding utopia due to its inability to discern core issues from interesting peripheral considerations. It may be advantageous in speculating upon the nature of particular questions within specific historical contexts, but it tends to fall short in clarifying certain transcendental issues underlying the utopian endeavour. Such specificity makes this classification more viable as a tool for uncovering the genealogy of utopia instead of its social relevance or transcendental potential.<sup>43</sup>

A second category commonly utilised by utopian scholars focuses on utopia *proper* in terms of its being a particular *form*. By this, utopia is considered the description of a 'good society' that utilises a specific literary genre. Within this discourse, More's *Utopia* is often held up as the paramount paradigm. Seen in this light, utopian texts are considered literary vehicles synonymous with the intention or structure of a novel, or in some cases actually considered novels in themselves.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, utopian literature gives a depiction of an ideal society functioning entirely within a fictional context. This perception rests on the notion that utopia describes its theories implicitly through their literary image instead of explicitly by decree. However, the fact remains that the intention of utopia is not to produce a work of art, but to produce a piece of poignant social criticism.

This characteristic prohibits utopian texts from being placed within the same category as those texts considered literature and is the central attribute overlooked in the attempt to procure a definition based on this criteria. Any serious attempt to encapsulate the multitude of characteristics related to utopia in terms of their relation to traditional literary devices is a hollow endeavour, because a large portion of work generally considered utopian doesn't meet such a stringent criteria.<sup>45</sup> There are large expanses of time within the history of the western world that failed to produce utopias meeting such rigid requirements, and to speculate that such periods contained no utopian activity is seemingly a serious miscalculation.

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<sup>43</sup>Levitas, Pg. 5.

<sup>44</sup>K. Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1987) Pg. 25. "Here it is made clear what is not apparent in the earlier utopias: that the utopia is closer to the novel than to any other literary genre; *is* in fact a novel, though not necessarily of the kind that we have come to identify too exclusively with its nineteenth-century form and focus."

<sup>45</sup>Kumar, Pg. 25.

Views incorporating such stringent attitudes are of little use in discovering the possible social ramifications of utopianism because they fail to take into consideration how attitudes can change from one historical context to the next, while the problems the ideals of utopia seek to address are transcendent. Therefore, this criteria aids in the perpetuation of the traditional misinterpretation surrounding the possibility of manifesting the attributes of these ideal configurations, and limits the potential benefits which might be brought by such endeavours.

The final method of categorising utopia departs from traditional lines of analysing utopian thought by considering its potential<sup>46</sup> as a means to enable a society to set out certain speculative goals. Within this context, utopia is not considered an ideal *form*, literary or otherwise, which may contain the possibility of becoming manifest, but as an impulse to create speculative objectives which could aid in the alleviation of predominant social ills. This view places specific emphasis upon utopia's capacity of fulfilling an important *function* within the dynamic relations of human societies. By clarifying certain desires amongst the community at large while simultaneously specifying the potential means which might bring them about, the utopian method contains the capacity to become a highly constructive tool of social criticism. Its objectives may not be completely realisable immediately, but they can provide a platform in which to raise questions regarding the legitimacy of existing social practices. Theories involving the functional aspect of utopia generally focus on issues raised by theories concerning social change and progress, either in relation to factors that can instigate or hinder such transformations.

A description of utopia based on its functional characteristics is given by Zygmunt Bauman, in his exploration of Socialism as the living utopia of the modern era.<sup>47</sup> Within this text, several assertions place emphasis on the potential function of utopia.<sup>48</sup> In the first place, utopia is considered an image of a better future which is yet to be fulfilled and requires a concerted effort to manifest the conditions it proposes. In the second, it projects a future that is desirable though not one which will necessarily become evident, but which should be materialised. Regarding the third, its imagery is critical of the existing structures of a society through the representation of a system fundamentally different from the present one. And finally, it is an image involving a certain danger because such a future will not come into existence without concerted effort. This criteria specifies that utopia is a social program

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<sup>46</sup>Levitas, Pg. 168-172.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., Pg. 168.

<sup>48</sup>Z. Bauman, *Socialism: The Active Utopia*. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1976) Pg. 17.

implicit in the institutional structures of human society which is the foundation of hope amongst the inhabitants of all its classes.<sup>49</sup>

This last concept is more suited to the pursuit of discovering important elements needed to formulate a critical utopian methodology useful within the realm of social and political philosophy than the preceding notions of *form* or *content*. There are several reasons which serve to merit such a claim. In the first instance, the functional notion of utopia hinges on the idea that change or the progression of civilisation is an inherent characteristic of mankind and that most changes must be envisioned prior to the mobilisation of the forces for the achievement of such progress<sup>50</sup>. Its claim rests on the notion of reinforcing the ability to achieve such changes by contemplating the likelihood of certain effects, before action is taken. This coincides with many abstract political theories which also speculate on the changes needed to overcome social ills and the definition of specific political intentions aimed at overcoming them.

In the second instance, for the definition of such goals to take place, a critique of existing societal structures and conditions must take place in order for an informed speculative process to emerge with the ability to uncover social and political shortcomings. And in the last, attempts to define utopia by its social function generally endeavour to relate conditions found within the utopian impulse to characteristics correlating to basic traits of human nature or aspects found inherently within the human condition. This is not necessarily a claim that the utopian has discovered the fundamental qualities of human nature and can now set out to construct the perfect societal structure to enhance such traits, but recognises that an essential feature of the human condition is the need for change and progress. Thus, utopian speculation concerning the latent potential of existing conditions, could harness this transcendental impulse, and channel it towards overcoming what existing conditions might lack.

Through an exploration of the descriptions concerning the essential characteristics of utopia, it is possible to begin to comprehend the enormous complexity surrounding much of the dialogue concerning its essential nature. In delving into the descriptive categories of *form*, *content*, and *function*, the shortcomings of the view that utopia is merely a fictive literary device becomes all too apparent. In some cases, the *form* a utopia may take is similar to that of a literary novel, but it nevertheless remains intrinsically linked to social and political concerns. Many critics of utopia mistake its packaging for its singularly most important trait

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<sup>49</sup>Levitas, Pg. 171.

<sup>50</sup>See Popper, Pg. 159. One of the main components of Popper's argument against utopia rests on what he conceives as the rational fallacy apparent in asserting that one can accurately forecast the effects of changes within the complex nature of Man's social structures. See also the chapter 7 of this text.



instead of its underlying concerns. Many authors within this tradition sought to specifically criticise their particular social contexts by depicting circumstances describing better conditions in an effort to provide subversive platforms for questioning the political *status quo* of the day. With this first criticism seemingly dispatched, our exploration will now turn to the second, which lays claim to a latent tendency towards tyranny within this discourse.

### ***Utopianism and Critical Political Theory***

To begin this criticism, the attributes involved in this form of thought in regards to its capacity as an trenchant tool of social and political analysis, must be laid bare and assessed. The utopian method, utilises hypothetical models as a means for the evaluation and testing of differing criteria which concerns both the present and possible future social configurations simultaneously. Because of its similarity to other procedures of social analysis, it would seem as though most political theoreticians would be open to its proposals. However, generally, this is not the case within the realm of political theory because its foundations rest on an orthodox empiricism which tends to relegate "imaginative proposals" to the periphery of discipline. This consignment is based on the conception that the products of the imagination are non-verifiable in the empirical sense and therefore less reliable. It is this tenuous assumption asserting that imaginative representations cannot convey the *truth* of reality which a political abstraction in the classic sense of the term is said to have, that is the basis for the separation of the utopian methodology from the realm of political thought *proper*.<sup>51</sup>

Despite this claim of superiority in relaying a truthful and realistic account of possible social conditions, the more traditional methods of abstract political theory are lacking in the capacity needed for an explanation of present social realities which can transcend the surface facts in order to explore the intrinsic root causes of problems embedded within it. Also, many of the methods within this tradition are of a static and ahistorical character, which deprives them of the attributes allowing a connection between their theoretical proposals for future circumstances to the relevant existing context. This also prohibits the comparison of such constructs to other alternative theoretical realities, thus making such methods less able to serve as an impetus of change or as a criteria for value judgements concerning a society's present social reality. Likewise, given the fact that their parameters are abstracted to the point of being several times removed from any recognisable feature of reality, political theories of this

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<sup>51</sup>Goodwin and Taylor, Pg. 20-21.

type are at risk of becoming purely normative and evaluative exercises with only a limited relevance to their contemporary political context.<sup>52</sup> The projection of such abstractions does contain the potential to inform the political philosopher of possible inconsistencies in the internal logic of the conceptual paradigm itself, but due to the removal of any parameters that remotely resemble circumstances contained within reality, opportunities are missed for the development of possible scenarios which can evaluate potential areas of conflict between the ideals of differing social classes or groups.<sup>53</sup> Such limitations could be effectively bridged by many of the attributes of the utopian method and it is this potential which will now be investigated.

### *I. The Essential Parameters of A Utopian Methodology of Social and Political Analysis.*

In their text, *The Politics of Utopia*, Barbara Goodwin and Keith Taylor assert that utopianism should be considered a viable form of political thought given its unique qualities not open to the theorist of the 'realist' tradition in political theory. Their claim is founded upon certain functional aspects of utopianism which have the ability to offset the setbacks that most abstract hypothetical methods of social criticism encounter.<sup>54</sup> Many problems typical to such methods are embodied in a prominent philosophy such as Marxism. The first of these, is concerned with the depiction of a future condition that is unnecessarily obscure and does not provide sufficient detail to allow it to be a truly constructive theory. A second, is the temporal distance that the potential future is positioned is too great a distance from the present to be considered a potent catalyst for change. Moreover, a further limitation can occur when such a doctrine deems progress or change inevitable, thereby causing the sense of urgency to be dissipated. This can inadvertently lead to the prevailing perception that the importance of critical analysis in capitalising on the latent potential within the existing institutions of a society for the instigation of necessary social changes is less than many theorists habitually claim.<sup>55</sup>

Consequently, many inherent qualities of the utopian method could be instrumental in overcoming these types of problems. One such aspect centres around the fact that in a

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., Pg. 21.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., Pg. 22.

<sup>54</sup>For a succinct and insightful discussion on the differing methods involved in social and political thought, see: Goodwin and Taylor, Pg. 22-28. For a good example of the use of the abstract hypothetical within the 'realist' tradition of political theory that is directly related to the notion of utopia; See R. Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

<sup>55</sup>Goodwin and Taylor, Pg. 26.

majority of cases, the future or alternative conditions proposed within these texts are connected or grounded within the existing social structures surrounding its conception. Such measures enable many of the ideas described within its discourse to be recognisable as directly linked to certain conditions within its present circumstance, thereby lending a greater chance of implementation for its proposals. As some critics of utopia claim, such proposals could entail an immediate and forceful break from the current course of the progression of an existing social structure, but such critiques rely on a conception of history depicting it as an infinite continuum in which any radical deviation from its plotted course would lead to catastrophic consequences. Such premises implicitly bestow a sense of destiny and are highly controversial theories themselves. If one were to conceive of history in a different manner, say, as a series of random events where mankind can attain a limited amount of influence, then the utopian endeavour seems as feasible as any theory advocating the inevitability of historical progress. The crucial point is that the utopian method projects a program which allows for the feeling of hopeful anticipation towards the improvement of future conditions by describing several possible alternatives which seem to be within Man's capacity to undertake.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, the second and most promising attribute that such a method contains is an intrinsic optimism which discourages the underlying fatalism found within other methodologies. This, coupled with the utopian's ability to project his or her proposals clearly and creatively, allows many ideal constructs the potential to serve as powerful tools for critical analysis. Such constructs can supersede existing social prejudices in order to provide the necessary distance for an objective perspective on concurrent realities. This approach tries to portray consistent ideals relating to certain desires and traits found within human nature and relates the potential such attributes at several varying levels simultaneously to those existing within the present context. Given this, and the prevailing myth that more traditionally accepted methods of political theory are more effective in projecting reliable proposals, it would seem prudent to remain open to the conception of utopia as a viable alternative means of constructive political criticism.

To provide the foundations for the justification of such a proposal, an analysis must be undertaken which focuses on its possible critical powers as well as its possible weaknesses. To comprehend what form these characteristics can take, one must understand several prerequisites important in considering its effectiveness as a tool of social analysis. Three important stipulations must be met before a theory can be considered truly effective within this context. Firstly, society must be conceived as an artefact with the possibility of being

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

purposely effected by the actions of Man. Secondly, an underlying belief that progress<sup>57</sup> in terms of the improvement of the conditions of the present is possible. And finally, a constructive analytical methodology must be free from the fatalism which habitually annuls any purposeful attempts at meaningful change. This last aspect includes any religious deference claiming the present state of affairs exists at the behest of some form of Deity and therefore accepted as destiny.<sup>58</sup> Thus, for a theoretical methodology to be considered simultaneously analytical and constructive there must be a fundamental conviction that change is possible, desirable, and within man's capacity to instigate.

The category of utopian thought, with the exception of particular types, such as Cockayneian or millennial utopias, seems to meet the criteria specified above and could provide constructive insights into future possibilities. Its ability to criticise the present and then utilise these criticisms as a platform for the projection of possible alternative futures, makes it more effective in some ways than more traditionally accepted social theory. A necessary criterion for the judgement of the feasibility of its proposals could draw strictly from experiences gained from observing the interaction of actual persons and institutions contained within real social structures. Such standards could aid in the assessment of the valid potential of such endeavours and rule out the extreme and fanatical views of millenarianism or science fiction. Theories of this kind have a tendency to obscure and trivialise the potential importance that certain forms of utopianism can take in regards to political criticism. So to be an effective critical device, utopia must be grounded within actual realities and describe existent human capabilities.

The insights gained from this would allow utopias to bridge the divide between purely critical techniques and constructive speculation, thus allowing for the production of theoretical constructs which can depict institutions or cultural patterns superior to those already in existence. With the utilisation of this constructive mode of criticism, the utopian works by example, projecting a descriptive image of a societal pattern which promises unequalled prosperity or more advanced forms of social justice. It works from the negative of its criticisms and moves towards the more positive aspect of proposing remedies meant to guide any attempts at social reform. Even if implementation is not possible within the near future, the debate surrounding utopian depictions usually involves such a large and varied cross-

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<sup>57</sup>The notion of progress is a highly complex and contentious issue. For an enlightened discussion on this matter, see J. Plamenatz, *Man & Society: Hegel, Marx, and Engels, and the Idea of Progress*. Vol. III, 2nd edition. (London: Longman group, 1992) Pg. 300-326. For a discussion on its direct relation to utopia, see T. Olsen, Pg. 229-235, also Pg. 265-267.

<sup>58</sup>Goodwin and Taylor, Pg. 23-24.



section of society, it is a crucial element in a democratic process of deciding fair and just practices.

Therefore, one of utopia's essential powers is the fact that although it is not actually located within *this* world, it contains references which connect it inextricably to our reality. Its singular focus analyses its subject through one of a multitude of potential frames of reference within the world. Hence, through the vehicle of metaphor, which is both critical and constructive, the conceptual gap is bridged allowing for a subjective theoretical world to be analysed for its potential within the reality of an objective one.<sup>59</sup> The components of these metaphorical representations of ideal worlds are not specified in an isolated or incremental manner, but attempt to formulate an innovative simultaneous world with intricate and interlocking components. In short, an alternative *possible world*.<sup>60</sup> Seen in this light, far from being merely literary vehicles of fantasy or totalitarian dreams, utopian 'possible world constructs' could serve as paradigms for analysis and speculation which can confront both problems and possibilities that are similar to those in a real social or political reality, but actually located at a guarded distance within the realm of the imagination.

## II. *The Method of "Possible Worlds Speculation".*

The focus of a justification of utopian thought as a form of *possible worlds* theory must entail a study of the feasibility of such mental constructs in discouraging the belief of the 'necessity' or inevitability of existing social patterns. Such an exploration must uncover utopia's ability to legitimately emphasise "the *contingency* of the existent"<sup>61</sup> as well as its capacity to deliver the necessary distance needed for attaining a reasonably objective perspective. The theoretical methodology of possible worlds speculation is often utilised by philosophers to discover the essential nature of objects through the construction of a simulated paradigm. This model utilises counterfactual elements which measure the importance of certain fundamental components found within an existing object or circumstance. When employed in the analysis of social configurations or historical events, the political philosopher can establish certain constants involved within human reality, and conjecture upon the possible outcome if

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<sup>59</sup>A. Tzonis, "Counterfactuals, Counternorms, and Transworld Mental Lines" in *Utopia E Modernita*. Vol. I. ed. Giuseppa Saccarro Del Buffa & Arthur O. Lewis. (Roma: Gangemi Editore, 1989) Pg. 71.

<sup>60</sup>Suvin, Pg. 58-59 The term 'world' in the context of this type of theory means that the parameters of the speculative paradigm borrows its social, political, and cultural structures from the surrounding context of its conception. See also: Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenologie de la Perception*. (Paris, nrf, 1945) Pg. 225.

<sup>61</sup>Goodwin and Taylor, Pg. 213.



specific events were altered within it. This allows speculation on the causal effects of certain changes on a societal structure in order to formulate a theoretical basis towards the possible alteration of a real structure.

There are two methods of constructing such a world<sup>62</sup>; the first is by the formulation of a *parallel* world which contains all the constant conditions of our objective reality copied exactly except for a few components which are purposely changed to evaluate their effects. The second is a *branching* world, which analyses how history may have developed had certain events not occurred. By removing such events and speculating upon the results, a historian can measure their effects on the course of history. Traditionally, most utopian thinkers seem to rely on a methodology similar to the former, because within their texts there is generally a conceptual break or separation from the immediate historical circumstances. However, not all utopians distance their work from the historical aspect of a situation, for there are numerous instances where a utilisation of the temporal dimension is undertaken to allow certain theories to move seamlessly between notions of past, present, and future, in an effort to instigate and test desired results. Both techniques are capable of achieving a certain distance from reality and therefore provide the sufficient measure of objectivity necessary for them to be considered equally legitimate procedures of analysis.

In the consideration of utopia as this form of thought experiment, certain concerns must be investigated in an effort to build a criterion outlining an acceptable distance from the historical or social configuration being studied. There is a certain amount of controversy within philosophical circles pertaining to the allowable distance counterfactual elements can attain before they lose their effectiveness. If characters from science fiction novels containing superhuman qualities are included within a possible world formula as counterfactual elements, then the credibility of such a thought experiment is seriously undermined as a theoretical device providing revealing information concerning the intrinsic parameters of the human condition.

To overcome such a potent liability, John Elster indicates the need for a kind of mediating device which he describes as the *dynamic criteria of legitimacy*.<sup>63</sup> He asserts that this standard could regulate the acceptable distance of a possible world paradigm from the conditions of actual political realities. By this, when discussing historical counterfactuals involved in the 'branching world' method, the further back one goes in history in the removal of a counterfactual element, the more distant the possibility that such a world could exist. Relating

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<sup>62</sup>J. Elster, *Logic and Society: Contradictions and Possible Worlds*. (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1978) Pgs. 57-58. *Op. cit.*, Goodwin and Taylor, Pg. 210-214.

<sup>63</sup>For a full and detailed explanation of the exact formula for this criterion; see Elster, Pg. 191.

to the one at present, and therefore the greater its distance from the reality it seeks to analyse. Similarly, in terms of a 'parallel world' experiment, the more constants that are changed and the extent of their variation, is directly proportional to their distance. Though this assertion could aid in the delineation of acceptable possible worlds in relation to their being valid speculative exercises, it fails to overcome the problem that all criteria envisioning possible or necessary conditions for human existence is debatable. Therefore, any possible world analysis deemed to have achieved the *acceptable* distance necessary to be considered valid would be free from controversy.

This contention uncovers some of the problems involved in the possibility of having a simultaneous world being different in only one or a few aspects. According to some metaphysical views concerning the composition of the world, even a remotely accurate representation of this world would be impossible because its varying components are so completely intermeshed a single change of the smallest circumstance would bring about ramifications impossible to accurately measure. Many proponents of the *possible worlds* theory have rejected such views on the grounds that they are too rigid or pessimistic, for if such notions were true, there could be no changes within this the world without changing it beyond human recognition.

Although this view concerning the intrinsic interrelation of the elements of this world is valid to a certain extent, there are elements which seem to be perceivable as consistent within the span of a human life. Given this, change should be regarded in light of factors claiming that if a variation within the world occurs, not all of the elements contained within it change, but the relationship of the altered element to all other components within the world changes. Thus, it is conceivable that for the creation of a possible world, one could imagine the prospect of identifying and fixing certain prevalent constants in any given world, mutating one or several of them, and evaluating their potential ramifications.

This view is closely related to Saul Kripke's assertion that a *possible world* should be considered a *skeletal world* where certain constant factors, (*rigid designators*<sup>64</sup>) are conceived as fixed situations and used as poignant indicators for discerning the elements having the potential to become manifest if certain circumstances were to change within the reality of the present world. In lieu of such possibility, it would seem acceptable for the utopian to project an image of an alternative reality containing several changes to the institutional structure of a

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<sup>64</sup>Saul Kripke's explicit definition for the term 'rigid designator', is "a term that designates the same object in all conceivable possible worlds." (Pg. 488) For an extended discussion of this term as well as his justification of its usage, see; "Identity and Necessity", in *Philosophy as it is*. (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1979) Pg. 488-496.

society without having to assume that these transformations would completely change the intrinsic behaviour of its inhabitants or the characteristics of their social interaction. There is a likelihood that some variation would occur which was not foreseen, but this does not rule out entirely the validity of such an exercise. At the very least, it could be considered feasible for a social or political theorist to project changes by this practice because its implications can be understandable to a large audience in a wide-range of disciplines. This potential instigation of a discourse amongst the various groups of a society is one of the greatest benefits such thought experiments could bestow, no matter how accurate or relevant the parameters of their model worlds might be.

### *III. Utopia as "Possible Worlds Speculation".*

In reference to these factors, it seems feasible for utopias meeting a certain criteria to be considered as valid methods of *possible worlds* speculation. Such methods can describe a skeletal framework of conditions relating to an existing society and thus contain the possibility of a reasonable amount of accuracy concerning the ramifications if certain changes are described. Such mental experiments could be viewed as counterfactual exercises attempting to measure the indispensable character of certain social institutions defining the human condition. The utilisation of such a methodology for the construction of a simulated paradigm could exclude or remove certain non-essential properties of modern society thereby enabling a theorist to uncover certain primary properties or situations foundationally imperative to the building of a just society. This notion of counterfactual speculation could also aid in the discovery of the root causes of various social ills which could be eliminated or altered in an attempt to construct societal institutions free from such ills. Hence, utopian thought experiments of this nature are seemingly a reasonable and useful tool, yet this method does not escape criticism utilising issues involving the potential for such a world to be only *proximately* located to this world and therefore only remotely possible.

Questions surrounding the legitimacy of such an approach are taken up by Elster in his discussion of the role of utopia regarding the notion of possible worlds.<sup>65</sup> Within this discussion his main point of contention is focused on utopia's claim of being capable of achieving in one transformative step, what should ultimately take two or even several steps.

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<sup>65</sup>Elster, Pg. 57.

He asserts that this claim is presumably false on two counts.<sup>66</sup> The first, is explained through the utilisation of an analogy involving a hill walker. In this example, as the climber ascends the hill, his ultimate goal is to reach the crest. According to the phenomenological theories of Husserl,<sup>67</sup> the climber is in possession of intentions that are simultaneously ultimate and immediate. At any given point in his ascent, the climber has an extensive awareness of all the elements within his immediate perceptive field. Though many elements are hidden from sight, they are nonetheless contained within their general sphere. This general awareness, however, is only in the empty formal sense because conceptions of such events are not based on actual perceptions in the present, but on logical mental interpretations relying on information gathered from past encounters with similar conditions.

As the ascent continues, the climber is continuously displaced to another perceptual field, where a new series of objects appear that influence and reshape his perceptions concerning the terrain as well as the choices made concerning the path taken to the summit. In reference to the potential of utopian thought as a *possible worlds* theory, as a society reached each new plateau in its process of social transformation, a new range of possibilities or difficulties would be encountered making the alternative world envisioned at the commencement of the process impossible due to the effects of these unforeseen circumstances. Such an attempt at reform would surely have to be abandoned during an intermediate step, therefore making the ultimate intention impossible to achieve.<sup>68</sup>

In response to this criticism, the hill climbing analogy can also be useful in illustrating a point about the relation of perception and intention. Elster is correct in his assumption that at each stage of the climb a new set of perceptual information would be acquired as well as alternative opportunities in reaching the apex of the hill. However, what does not necessarily change, is the intention or desire to reach the summit, which remains the ultimate goal within the climber's horizon of possibilities. Though the terrain might change and unexpected conditions crop up, the serious and determined walker would improvise before abandoning his goal altogether. If Elster's criticism is indicating cases where utopian theorists expected their prescriptive reforms to be carried out to the last letter, then his critique is well founded. Throughout history, rigid and fanatical attempts at transforming human societies have generally failed and were abandoned. If however, as is the case with a great many utopias, the

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<sup>66</sup>Elster, Ibid. This point of contention is also related to Popper's argument against the belief that if action is based on a rational plan it can be undertaken with a reasonable chance for success because its effects can be logically predicted. (See chapter 7 of this text).

<sup>67</sup>Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. Trans. by W. R. Boyce Gibson. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1931) Pg. 103-105, 119 - 128. *op. cit.* Elster, Pg. 57.

<sup>68</sup>Elster, Pg. 58.



methods for achieving the proposals described could be modified as unforeseen situations arose, then the criticism falls wide of the mark. To propose that any form of utopian proposals could be realisable would have to incur a certain measure of intrinsic flexibility. This would be a necessary condition for its successful integration into any existing social and political contours.

In conclusion, much of the criticism of the utopian endeavour stems from a persistent confusion surrounding the goals it seeks to achieve. Such an endeavour can assume many forms ranging from the portrayal of a simultaneous critical paradigm to a theoretical plan directly related to a specific type of social reform. If utopian thought in relation to a 'possible worlds' theory is viewed as a conscious-raising exercise impregnated with possibilities for the transformation of an existing social and political realm, then the notion that it is somehow lacking because it is several times removed from a certain view of reality loses much of its potency. Seen in relation to its potential for analogous criticism, the possible worlds methodology could provide a systematic purpose and foundation for utopian thought within the realm of social and political philosophy. Therefore, the traditional misconception that utopian thought is concerned solely with the production of static blueprints of societal perfection should be superseded by the perception of its being a thought process utilised for discovering, analysing, and speculating upon the latent potential contained within existing social structures. If applied in this spirit, its traditionally negative reputation could be shed in favour of its being perceived as a powerful philosophical tool of analysis.

### ***A Working Definition of Utopia***

Within the preceding discussion on the topic of utopia, two predominant misinterpretations have been addressed underlying its traditional perception. These negative attitudes rest on mistaken assumptions that the utopian method is merely a compensatory device of producing imaginative fictions or the manifestation of an intellectual tendency towards dogma seeking to manifest absolutist political schemes. This investigation has taken the position that such accusations are not necessarily the only outcomes possible if such speculation is undertaken. Our proposal has been that the utopian endeavour is an method of experimental conjecture which produces theoretical paradigms involving potential alternative futures in an effort to gain critical insights into possible goals or objectives.



Seen in this light, the abstract conceptions of utopianism are not just wishful mental constructs conceived within the vacuum of the human imagination, but idealisations grounded within the context of the existing reality which can serve as requisite elements for the investigation of certain theoretical premises poised to unleash forces aimed at social reconstruction. Similarly, they can also provide conceptual avenues to evidence concerning the integrity of the ideological premises underlying contemporary social and political configurations.<sup>69</sup> In so doing, the utopian impulse draws on the latent potential for change contained within the social sphere of the present to indicate possible political transformations before their explicit emergence as socially disruptive devices within the fabric of a society. It is for this reason that the 'premature truths' which utopia encapsulates, habitually incite those individuals enmeshed within the dominant social and political order to criticise its main tenets as merely illusory ideas because such notions can threaten the intellectual foundations embodied in a system which has greatly benefited them.<sup>70</sup>

Given this, the main assumption of our definition rests on the notion that utopia must be conceived less in terms of being a *state*, and more in terms of its being a constructive critical *process*.<sup>71</sup> The central apparatus of this process consists of the projection of theoretical constructs which contain the capacity to simultaneously criticise and inform the ideological configurations which regulate and reinforce the customs or beliefs organising our daily existence. Such a process is a necessary component for the social imagination of man as he strives to surpass the *given* of the present in route to the potential of the future horizon. For it is the future which can offer the greatest freedom and power in that it is the only sphere in which one can truly take action. These acts, however, are not without risk or danger given that their outcome is intrinsically uncertain. This uncertainty is inherent to the realm of the future because factual knowledge based on empirical investigation is impossible to ascertain

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<sup>69</sup>Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., LTD., 1940) Pg. 182.

<sup>70</sup>Mannheim, Pg. 183. The author follows an assertion by Lamartine that "Utopias are often only premature truths". Thus, a utopia is describing, at least in a partial manner, conditions of an ascending order, while the critics of such an exercise usually belong to the representative order of an epoch that has passed or its strength is waning.

<sup>71</sup>Suvin, Pg. 55. The author follows Fredric Jameson's interpretation of Louis Marin's text in conceiving the utopian discourse as a form of process imbuing a creative power akin to the Greek term, *energeia* verses a created product or *ergon*. Utopian representations are considered; "Those collective representations of contemporary society which inform our ideologies just as they order our experience of daily life". For further explanation of this conception, see; Fredric Jameson, "Of Islands and Trenches" in *Diacritics* (June 1977) Pg. 2-21. See also, Louis Marin, *Utopics: Spatial Play*. (United States: Humanities Press Inc., 1984).

within it.<sup>72</sup> The fear of this risk must be overcome, because it is within the future that the praxis of the present contains its greatest potential. The conceptualisations propagated by the faculty of the imagination can provide the theoretical foundation for our activities within the future horizon. Thus, it is within man's capacity to envision the future that the impulse for utopia resides.

At the level of the imagination, the quest for utopia embodies the transcendental component of the psyche which serves as the "methodological organ for the new".<sup>73</sup> It is the intrinsic human trait which is linked to our ability to hope for, or desire a better future and its faculty of visualisation serves as the imperative first step in the process of realisation. Hence, it is not the complete manifestation of such visions which is crucial to the essential Being of mankind, but the process of striving and the purpose that it bestows which is the cardinal element of the utopian impulse. It is on this basis that our assertion rests, that utopia, and the impulse which underlies it, must be considered a perpetually *open* process and never a *finished* or completed state.

At the level of socialisation, this perpetual drive towards the projection of the "new", places the utopian impulse in a dialectical relationship to the existing social hierarchy. The unfulfilled ideals or desires existing dormant within the intrinsic structure of this hierarchy serve as critical material for the dismantling of the negative aspects of the existing social order while visions are simultaneously constituted that lead the way towards the development of new configurations that overcome them.<sup>74</sup> This conception is, however, of utopian thought *proper* in its most beneficial role as the theoretical foil to the overriding tendency of the dominant ideology within each epoch towards closure. It is imperative not to underestimate or misinterpret the intrinsic link between these forces. Though utopia and ideology may be diametrically opposed, they are still contained within the same general structure of social and political representation. Through this connection, it is possible for utopian desires to be enslaved by the dominant ideology and channelled in such a way as to become merely

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<sup>72</sup>Bertrand de Jouvenel, *The Art of Conjecture*. Trans. by Nikita Lary. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967) Pg. 3-5. de Jouvenel points out that the Latin terms describing the past, and the future present are asymmetrical in their emphasis; '.....past events or situations are *facta* and future ones *futura*.' These terms rest on notions described by verbs such as *facere* and *esse*, meaning; 'to do or make' and 'to be' respectively. The author describes a similar opposition between the terms, *perfectum* and *infectum*, with the former referring to a completed act or event (a fact) while the latter refers to something that can become a fact only if such an event occurs (a conditional). Thus, to labour in regards to changing the past is to labour in vain because the task is already completed. Given this, the only potential fruit for our labour would rest somewhere in the future tense.

<sup>73</sup>Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope* Vol. I. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) Pg. 157. See also chapter 4 of this text.

<sup>74</sup>Mannheim, P. 179.

motivational devices inciting dogmatic co-operation.<sup>75</sup> In this event, utopia loses its critical power and becomes the metaphoric 'bone' thrown to a dog for behaving in a way desired by its master.

The discipline demanded by the dominant ideology is an equally necessary component to our social existence and the functioning of a society, but its structure must not be allowed to exist unchecked or the customs which are the embodiment of its inherent premises for existence will, inadvertently or otherwise, inhibit an individual's ability to live creatively. The thought experiments intrinsic to the utopian impulse must serve as critical monitors of the configurations that exist, yet contain potential to become better, to develop more fully in a benevolent manner.<sup>76</sup> This should not be instantaneous, but a constant and perpetual process. Therefore, it is imperative for this process not to provide static measures in the form of empirical data, but orientations towards the potential realities resting on the verge of the future horizon, driven by desire and interpretable only by the imagination. It is in this form that such an inclination is connected to and inherently becomes, a power, which effects all the varying levels of human existence and potential.

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<sup>75</sup>Tom Moylan, *Demand The Impossible*. (London: Methuen, 1986) Pg. 19. Moylan follows Mannheim's definition of ideology as the 'complex of ideas' influencing activity towards the maintenance of the *status quo* or the dominant ruling structure. He also agrees that the assertion made by Mannheim that the proper role of utopia should be to challenge this, but disagrees with him concerning the notion that a utopia fails if it doesn't eventually succeed in becoming manifest. By emphasising the capacity of the dominant ideology to utilise the utopian impulse for its own purposes he uncovers the fragile position that utopia inhabits between co-operation with or subversion of, the predominant social and political structure. See chapter 5 of this text.

<sup>76</sup>Francis and Barbara Golfing, "An Essay on Utopian Possibility" in *Utopia*. ed. George Kateb. (New York: Atherton Press, 1971) Pg. 39.

## **Chapter II:**

### ***On Power***

Intrinsically connected to the impulse towards utopia is a similar drive which serves as the impetus that evokes men to take action towards the fulfilment of their desires. This drive is progressively more complex than those of other animals who merely seek to satisfy the primitive needs of survival and reproduction. Men strive towards meeting more than these demands, they seek to expand their influence on, and command over, the elements comprising their immediate surroundings. Such desires are insatiable because as each obstacle is overcome, the human imagination redirects its focus towards another.<sup>1</sup> With each successive surpassing of an obstacle feelings of confidence and security grow which are addictive, causing the cycle to perpetuate. The existence of this incessant impulse produces the necessity of morality, government, and compromise, owing to the periodic social instability and sporadic violence arising in its wake. This impulse is the drive for *power*, and coupled with the utopian imagination comprises a fundamental force in the formation and make-up of mankind's social and political configurations.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bertrand Russell, *Power: A New Social Analysis*. (London: Routledge, 1995) Pg. 7-8.

<sup>2</sup>Russell, Pg. 9-10. Russell asserts that power is the fundamental concept of social science akin to the way in which energy is the primary concept to the discipline of physics. Power, like energy, has a variety of manifestations such as wealth, coercive force, and control of public opinion. To single out any



The term, *power* is a derivative of the French verb, *pouvoir*, and can be traced to the Latin *potentia*, meaning 'ability or potential'. The common Roman usage of the word described the *capacity* or *ability* to affect another person or thing. Though seemingly a simple concept, its essential nature is highly contested and utilised in a multitude of varying interpretations. This disparity, along with power's intrinsic relation to concepts such as *authority*, *coercion*, and *violence*, sparks great debate concerning its role in the formation and functioning of the social sphere.<sup>3</sup> Coupled with the notion of capacity, such associations begin to indicate another aspect attributable to power, *domination*. Accordingly, this investigation will seek to uncover these simultaneous implications of power within the context of its exercise within the social sphere.

It is this attribute of simultaneity which will serve to guide this investigation of the essential nature of power. Thus, from a departure point depicting power as essentially, 'one agent or agency affecting the attitudes and/or actions of another',<sup>4</sup> an examination into Steven Lukes's view of its intrinsic multi-dimensionality will provide an introduction into the difficulties encountered in uncovering its complex and subtle nature. Though his definition<sup>5</sup>, does not lead to a incontestable clarity on the subject, it does provide an insightful explication into several of the central views concerning this subject within the disciplines of sociology and political theory.

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one of these as the overriding concept to which all others are secondary will give a partial and incomplete account of its true nature. Power must be described in terms of its passing from one of its potential forms to another continually, and it is the laws governing these transformations rather than a description resting on any one state which must be ascertained for the proper understanding of this notion and its relevance to the social sphere.

<sup>3</sup>T. Ball, "Power" in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1987) Pg. 397.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. Ball asserts that at a minimum, most analysts agree that this definition is adequate for outlining some form of common ground as a departure point for the critical dialogue concerning the subject.

<sup>5</sup>Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*. (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1974) Pg. 9. With this assertion, the author claims that the concept of power is to be included in a theoretical category outlined by W. B. Gallie in an article entitled 'Essentially Contested Concepts' in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 56 (1955-6) Pg. 167-98. In Gallie's view, for a concept to be 'essentially contested' it must be appraisive in that it is related to some form of valued idea. It must be of an internally complex character and in the initial sense, variously describable, due to its intrinsically open disposition readily modifiable in light of its changing circumstances. And finally, all parties involved respectfully recognise the stance of other serious views on the subject. Such concepts are the recognised grounds for philosophical inquiry.



### *Three Dimensions of Power*

In the text, *Power, A Radical View*, Lukes gives an account of three main currents of thought concerning power. These perspectives are described as the *One*-, *Two*-, and *Three Dimensional views*. In the *One-Dimensional* view, power is conceived as a behavioural issue involving the decision process undertaken in regards to situations where an explicit friction between certain subjective groups or individual interests is present.<sup>6</sup> Modern social theorists ascribing to this position, such as Robert Dahl<sup>7</sup>, generally follow Hobbes's assertion that the idea of power intrinsically rests on the relationship between cause and effect.

The interests of the acting agent attempting to effect or cause subsequent actions by another agent is inherently linked to the former's desire to manifest some preconceived end. In other words, the first agent exercises his power by intentionally manipulating the second agent in order to manifest his conception of a "good". To Hobbes, the achievement of such an end represents the satisfaction of a desire. Power is conceived as the ability to manipulate ones' immediate surroundings as the means towards satisfying ones' needs and desires. This incessant drive towards the satisfaction of such desires is described as; "...a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of Power after power that ceaseth onely in Death."<sup>8</sup>

Consequently, given that man inhabits a world of limited resources and harbours an infinite multitude of desires, inevitably differences of interest arise acting as the impetus for perpetual conflicts. The agent or group that successfully influences the situation in favour of their interests are described as having exercised power over others trying to manifest different concerns. It is the overt actions of the former, that materialise their interests or cause certain events to unfold.<sup>9</sup> Power, according to this first view, is intrinsic to the conflicts involving human interests and relates directly to certain behaviour. Given this dependence on human

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<sup>6</sup>Lukes, Pg. 15.

<sup>7</sup>See Robert A. Dahl, "The Concept of Power" in *Behavioural Science*, 2 (1957) Pg. 201-205. Dahl asserts that intuitively power can be defined as 'A has power over B to the extent that A can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do.' *op. cit.*, Lukes, Pg. 13-14.

<sup>8</sup>Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1914) Pg. 49. See also, Iain Hampsher-Monk, *A History of Modern Political Thought: Major Political Thinkers from Hobbes to Marx*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992) Pg. 23-24. "Power is not confined simply to physical force: it includes any attribute which enables a man to affect the world to what he deems his advantage."

<sup>9</sup>Ball, Pg. 397-398. Hobbes asserts that; "Power and cause are the same thing. Correspondent to cause and effect; nay, those and these are the same things.....Wherefore the *power of the agent* and the *efficient cause* are the same thing."

action, its effects must therefore be observable. As a result, without conflict, and the behaviour surrounding it, the exercise of power will not arise.

The *Two-Dimensional View*, accepts this initial premise, but attempts to advance this theory by seeking to describe a second, more 'hidden face' of power. Hence, this view is asserting that it contains overt manifestations as well as covert ones. Its proponents indicate evidence supporting the contention that coupled with the notion of power being exercised when one agent seeks to effect another's actions, it is also exercised when an agent or group creates or reinforces certain social structures or institutions that implicitly favour their interests. If successful, it becomes difficult for the latter agent or group to introduce any issues that might influence the situation to the disadvantage of the former group's interests.<sup>10</sup> This implicit domination of the political agenda gives those controlling certain governing apparatuses the ability to manipulate the prevailing perceptions of the group to avoid certain conflicts detrimental to their interests. In this way, any potential threats can be undermined by portraying the issues that the subordinate group seeks to address as irrelevant or by shifting them to areas where its superiority is more secure.

Whereas the pluralist conception of power rested solely on the process of overt decision-making and the observable conflicts which can arise from such actions, the *Two-Dimensional* view asserts that a process of non decision-making must also be incorporated into any theory concerning power. In making a decision, a course of action is chosen from several alternatives, while a non-decision involves foregoing a course of action resulting in the repression of any potential for contesting the beliefs or interests of the actively decisive agent.<sup>11</sup> This departure from conceiving the exercise of power as an act of decision-making in a situation of conflict is significant because it indicates that power can be exercised more efficiently when no explicit challenges are made. This uncovers the significance of controlling the *potential* for action by manipulating when and where the possibility of a conflict of interests can arise through the utilisation of existing apparatuses of coercion implicit to the dominant ideology of the governing structure.

Lukes admits that the incorporation of the notion of agenda control and the suppression of potential by this view of power is a marked advance over the pluralist view, but he claims that it still hasn't addressed the three crucial issues necessary in providing a complete conceptual analysis of power<sup>12</sup>. In the first of these, he asserts that there is still too much reliance on the

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<sup>10</sup>Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, *Power and Poverty. Theory and Practice*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970) Pg. 7. *Op. cit.*; Lukes, Pg. 16.

<sup>11</sup>Bachrach and Baratz, Pg. 39 & 44. Lukes, Pg. 18.

<sup>12</sup>Lukes, Pg. 21-23.

analysis of overt behaviour for its critical basis. The individualist methodology of conceiving power as the realisation of human will conceived in theoretical isolation is still present and overlooks the fact that the human condition is intrinsically embedded within a collective system. To comprehend the concept of power correctly then, the extent of the influence of such systems and 'the mobilisation of bias' implicit within them must be included. As Marxist theory asserts, actual men make the decisions which define history, but the circumstances and resources for which these decisions are based is passed from generation to generation through a systematic ideological lineage.

In regards to the second inadequacy,<sup>13</sup> the persistence of the notion that conflict is the only reliable monitor of the exercise of power must be challenged. It may be true that some agents exercise power over others by affecting their actions contrary to their original intention in an overtly coercive manner, however this can be accomplished more effectively by influencing the very nature of their desires. The inherent dilemma with the insistence that power emerges wholly within the context of conflict, is that it commits this notion to the role of being the necessary element in any conception of power. Such a commitment inevitably excludes many important manifestations which do not involve observable conflict such as controlling public opinion and the indoctrination of the population as a whole through 'education'. Manipulation through the socialisation process of a society can instil values and beliefs which alleviate the chances for conflict to arise. In addition, it is an appearance of stability which bestows upon any dominant ideological system the legitimacy it needs to maintain its position.

The final component of Lukes's critique of the 'Two-Dimensional' view contends that the power of the non-decision process exists solely within the context of grievances whose entry into the political process is obstructed. Any analysis ignoring this process is sorely lacking in providing a comprehensive picture of all the possible attributes of power.<sup>14</sup> If the desires or beliefs of those enmeshed within the dominant value system have no perceived hardships placed on them, then it is contested that their interests are not impaired by the exercise of power. To contemplate *grievance* as the sole indication that power is being exercised is to make a similar mistake to that of the pluralist's contention of the necessity of observable conflict. Seemingly the most effective way to exercise power over subjugate persons is avoid the *possibility* that grievances will arise by formulating systems which implicitly influence essential perceptions informing an individual's cognition of its interests. In this way, no dissatisfaction can arise because there is an unquestioning acceptance of the existing social

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., Pg. 23.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., Pg. 24.



configurations due to the perceived absence of an alternative, or the wide-spread perception that a system is divinely inspired or benevolent. In such a circumstance, the first agent controls the second by instilling mistaken beliefs connected with the real interests of the latter. Thus, to control the *potential* interests of a person is to exercise complete power over that person, because gaining influence over the possible occurrence of interests allows the ability to manipulate certain important possibilities before they become explicit.

From this critique, Lukes presents his *Three-Dimensional* view of power which seeks to balance the attributes of individualism concerning power with certain theories found in Marxism such as the notion of 'false consciousness'<sup>15</sup>. This theory seeks to move past the behaviourist focus involved in the preceding views in order to consolidate their features with the *latent conflict* existing within the discrepancy of interests between those in power and those it attempts to ostracise from the political process.<sup>16</sup> The latter group may not consciously realise that its interests are being pushed aside because the system of exclusion is presented in a way completely acceptable to them.

In regards to the present study, what is interesting about this last view is that Lukes is trying to rectify two theoretical inclinations, one more subjective, owing to its intrinsic relation to individual intentions, while the other is more objective, because it focuses on the social superstructures of man's societies. Both of these concepts are involved within a larger philosophical discourse concerning the essential nature of power. The latter argument asserts power cannot be described as an entity in itself, but merely as a characteristic emergent within the dynamics of the relations between varying individuals or groups. By this conception it would be possible to verify the totality of its relevant characteristics by empirically observing its *effects* within the dynamics of social relations.

The former conception holds that there is a unity of characteristics comprising an essence to power and it is this core *affect* that embodies the central driving force underlying the dynamic relationship between the world and man's inner nature.<sup>17</sup> Though most theories of power may

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<sup>15</sup>Ball, Pg. 399.

<sup>16</sup>Lukes, Pg. 24-25.

<sup>17</sup>See, P. Morriss, *Power, A Philosophical Analysis*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987) Chapter 2. Morriss discusses a view concerning the implicit differences in the terms; power and influence. The author asserts that because the Latin usage of the term power means "to be able", while influence, meaning "to flow in", they are completely different terms. In the context of Morriss's argument, power is involved in the notion of capacity which makes it *effectual*, while influence is a term describing an *affectual* force. This attempt at discerning the nature of power through an analysis of linguistic terms seems to be too narrowly conceived. Influence is a form of *affect*, therefore it must be conceived as being a form of power. To influence another's actions seems to be an act of exercising some form of power over them, though in a implicit manner.

not fall perfectly into one category, in order to clarify much of the obscurity surrounding the subject, these categories can serve as points of reference. To comprehend the significance of these differing accounts, this investigation will first explore the effectual 'relational' concept of power followed by an examination of the implications of the more affectual or 'metaphysical' idea of power.

### ***The Concept of Power as Relational Effect.***

Within discourse surrounding this view, there are various interpretations, but one of the most interesting explications is by Norbert Elias, which attempts to establish a sociological ontology through the analysis of the dialectic between power and freedom. Elias asserts that the traditional depiction of the relation between these notions has been mistaken in that freedom is considered the fundamental existent of the human condition while power is the innate characteristic of social structures, institutions, or certain individuals striving to crush or control this intrinsic element. To Elias, this relationship should be reconsidered in lieu of conceiving its attributes in a more diametrically opposed relation. Thus, power and freedom are considered purely on the basis of their being social attributes which evoke certain empirically observable effects. This conception historically contextualises these notions by linking them intrinsically to the conditions of their surrounding social structures and institutions. Michel Foucault also utilises a similar premise in his theory of power exploring both its negative and positive attributes. These productive/restrictive qualities serve as the foundational postulates for considering the notion of power as a relational concept.

#### ***I. Power and Freedom***

A key component of Elias's conception of power is based on the premise that it is a manifestation inherent to, and found only within, relationships involving individuals, groups, or social institutions. It must therefore never be considered as a *thing* comprising its own set of unique characteristics.<sup>18</sup> Power is to be considered a *unity* because it contains similar traits that are found within all human relationships, but does not mean that an entity identifiable as

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<sup>18</sup>See Ian Burkitt, "Overcoming Metaphysics: Elias and Foucault on Power and Freedom" in *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, March 1993, Pg. 51. Elias states that "power is not an amulet possessed by one person and not another; it is a structural characteristic of human relationships-of *all* human relationships." *Op. cit.* Norbert Elias, *What is Sociology?* (London: Hutchinson, 1978) Pg. 74.



power can be isolated from its surrounding context. What Elias is seeking to describe is a unity of characteristics and not an essence. According to this view, power is an innate component contained within the dynamics of the configurations and structures involved in human relationships. These social patterns comprise a series of interdependent collectives consisting of various intricate balances of power at a number of levels. This depiction is similar to the Marxian notion of a historically determinate superstructure. Within this context, power relations are seen to be diametric 'balances' of power, where one group or individual never possesses 'absolute power', because each contains a certain amount of control over others, regardless of their position within the social structure. Therefore, the higher the ratio of power gained, the greater the capacity for a group or individual to guide the activities of others.<sup>19</sup>

According to this, everyone enmeshed in a social superstructure contains a degree of power affording some resistance towards the activities of others as well as allowing the capacity to embark on their own activities. It is this characteristic of human relations which underlies Elias's claim that metaphysical conceptions positioning power and freedom in perpetual opposition must be jettisoned for views based on empirical investigation into the prevalent relational forms of power.<sup>20</sup> Such investigation must consider the attribute of power essentially interconnected with freedom given that both traits are interlocked within the framework of dependency constituting a society.

Hence, given the notion that power cannot be taken as a metaphysical absolute, freedom cannot be conceived in this manner either. No one is free in the pure sense of the word, nor are they completely immune to the effects of the actions of others. Freedom is considered a form of power relating to the notion of *capacity* allowing an individual or group to control its actions in relation to the resistance of other forces. By this conception, power emerges as a positive and negative force. It is productive in light of its linkage to the actualisation of identity, as well as limiting in its relation to dominance and coercion. Consequently, power and freedom are intrinsically related within the social framework constituting a historical event, for they are inherently *effectual* characteristics contained within its specific circumstance. Therefore, since such characteristics are said to be inextricably linked and are empirically observable events, notions which conceive them as unified entities with metaphysical qualities are misconceived.

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<sup>19</sup>Burkitt, Pg. 52.

<sup>20</sup>Burkitt, Pg. 52-53.

## II. Empowerment and Domination

Like Elias, Michel Foucault also asserts that power is a form of relation and not a 'thing' which can exist independently or outside the circumstance in which it emerges. It is considered a force that is the embodiment of behaviour which does not act directly on the person of others, but only on their actions.<sup>21</sup> Given this, the exercise of power is depicted as a framework of actions that constrains or promotes other actions. From this, power is both productive, given its ability to induce certain individual actions, and restrictive, because it can hinder others within a social configuration as well. No individual or group is considered to have complete autonomy in the relational structure, thus the traditional view linked to the notion that true power is linked solely to sovereignty is deemed inadequate:

".....By Power, I do not mean, either, a mode of subjugation which, in contrast to violence, has the form of the rule. Finally, I do not have in mind a general system of domination exerted by one group over the other.....The analysis, made in terms of power, must not assume that the sovereignty of the State, or the form of the law, or the overall unity of domination are given at the outset; rather, these are only the terminal forms which power takes."<sup>22</sup>

Foucault sees the forms of power manifested within relations *over* subjects containing the freedom to make choices within a fluctuating field of possible alternatives. These choices influence the realisation of an individual's personal and social identity. If the actions of intrinsically free individuals are not involved, there is no power, for the network of social inter-relations are non-existent. This type of activity is intrinsic to any real social structure because the actions of those inhabiting it cannot be undertaken without effecting the potential conduct of others, or in turn, having their practices transformed. All societies are founded on such relations, for if it was attempted to conceive of a society without them, at best, it could only be a remote abstraction of the actual social configurations.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, to Foucault, power does not exist in terms of its being an institution, structure, or attribute of personal strength, but exists as a multifaceted and fluid configuration of relational actions. So, to this point, Elias and Foucault seem to agree concerning the idea of power being an intrinsic

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<sup>21</sup>Michel Foucault, "The Subject and the Power" in *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and Hermeneutics*. By H. J. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow. (Brighton: Harvester Press Ltd. 1982) Pg. 220. *Op. cit.*, Burkitt, Pg. 55.

<sup>22</sup>R. Dreyfus, "On the Ordering of Things: Being and Power in Heidegger and Foucault" in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*. (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992.) Pg. 81. See also, Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality I: An Introduction*, (New York: Vintage, 1980) Pg. 92.

<sup>23</sup>Dreyfus, Pg. 82. See also M. Foucault, "The Subject and the Power", Pg. 220-221.

product of relations embedded within the intricate framework of social patterns, but when compared further these theories quickly diverge.

Elias feels power and freedom are not positioned in a polar opposition, but intrinsically interconnected to form a kind of dialectical equilibrium of interdependence. Foucault, however, perceives the relation of power and freedom containing a differing dynamic:

"Power is exercised only over subjects, and only in so far as they are free. By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions, and diverse comportments may be realised. (T)o 'conduct is at the same time to 'lead' others.....and a way of behaving within more or less open field of possibilities. The exercise of power consists in guiding the possibility of conduct and putting in order the possible outcome. Basically, power is less a confrontation between two adversaries or linking of one to the other than a question of government.....To govern, in this sense is to structure the possible field of action of others."<sup>24</sup>

Foucault deviates from Elias's argument by insisting that freedom is a prerequisite for the exercise of power. By this, power is exercised *over* subjects which are essentially free and rests on the assumption that it is a coercive force having the ability to produce both positive and negative effects depending on ones' position within the collective. Power seems connected primarily with the act of governing. Both it and freedom are related to intention and embody the confrontation of desires contained within the social arena. Accordingly, if power is intrinsically connected to governing, then freedom is seen as the resistance to the actions of the government by those it seeks to control.<sup>25</sup> So, the governed express their essential freedom through a resistance to the ruling elite in order to enlarge their range of possibilities. The government, in turn, seeks to control this resistance by constricting the field of potential actions. With this, the exercise of *power* by the government is in direct competition with the *freedom* of action fundamental to the those it governs.

Such a conception differs greatly from the one promoted by Elias which visualises power, not in terms of its being a coercive force, but as "the opposition of choice."<sup>26</sup> It is seen as a correlative phenomenon manifesting itself when the potential for autonomous acts increases. By removing the coercive element from the concept of power relations, a 'figural' process of logic emerges that foregoes the notion of a conscious design behind the exercise of power. This tacit logic of events is similar to Adam Smith's conception of the "invisible hand"

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., *Op. Cit.*; Foucault, Pg. 219-221.

<sup>25</sup>Burkitt, Pg. 57-58.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., Pg. 55.

theory<sup>27</sup> which describes random, yet loosely connected social events appearing to be orchestrated by some implicit strategy, but for the most part purely coincidental.

The major difference between these views rests on their varying emphasis concerning the nature of a relationship. According to Elias, power is seen to exist within a complex of intricately balanced social relations relating to the concept of a *symmetrical pair relationship*.<sup>28</sup> This type of relation is exemplified by certain individuals or groups appealing to or repulsing others where they are bound by either loyalty or dissension. Though each force is in polar opposition, there exists a reciprocal dialogue between the constituent components in which all parties utilise simultaneously sanctions or rewards in an effort to shift the balance of power in favour of their interests. This, according to Elias's description, is the typical model for a relation, typifying his conception of the connection between freedom and power. Each agent shares the ability to exercise some power over others to a certain degree. This type of relationship can also be adversarial if antagonists of equal strength become intertwined in a protracted struggle for outright superiority. If each are relatively evenly matched in their abilities and strengths, a stalemate ensues, for each contain the initiative for action, but to actually embark upon a campaign of confrontation might lead to the destruction of all involved.

Foucault's account of power rests on an implicit paradigm described as an *asymmetrical pair relationship*.<sup>29</sup> According to this depiction, relationships within a society are conceived as being purely oppositional where opponents struggle for control over a certain field of possibilities containing advantages such as social positions, wealth, or information. As noted above, such relations can remain symmetrical if the strengths afforded to agents or collectives are evenly matched. If, however, this equilibrium changes and one individual or group gains an advantageous position over the others, the parameters and dynamics of the situation change dramatically. If this solidifies, a hierarchical structure commences to form where the characteristics of power are distributed in a 'top-down' fashion throughout the social structure. In such cases, the typical model for the interaction of individuals or groups are in the form of

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<sup>27</sup>See Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of The Wealth of Nations*. Vol. I. ed. by Edwin Cannan (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1982) Pg. 421. Smith describes this theory; "...As every individual, therefore, endeavours as much as he can both to employ his capital in the support of domestic industry, and so to direct that industry that its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectual than he really intends to promote it."

<sup>28</sup>Richard A. Schermerhorn, *Society and Power*. (New York: Random House, 1961) Pg. 2-4.

<sup>29</sup>Schermerhorn, Pg. 4-12.



those in super-ordinate positions (leaders), regulating the potential actions of others in a subordinate positions (followers).

In such a circumstance, the notion of authority emerges as the key component to any practices involved in the exercise of power. The subordinate will obey a figure in a position of authority for several reasons<sup>30</sup>. Firstly, where the objectification of social norms and values requires straightforward obedience. Secondly, where there is a perception by the subordinate that the figure has a certain expertise which bestows a greater capacity for undertaking actions within the immediate context. Thirdly, an institutional structure grants authority or legitimacy to a figure through social demarcations such as titles or through the perception that it contains a superior capacity in the use of coercive measures such as violence. And finally, obedience to a dominant figure is ingrained within the subordinate due to tendencies reinforced by habit, norms, or tradition.

The first three reasons illustrated demand submission by evoking pressure or a sense of urgency on the subordinate agents involved. The fourth reason exemplifies a relationship of total control, which is generally violently coercive and lacks the legitimacy of a principle or title. The last reason entails a certain amount of emotional detachment and indifference. Enduring habits and customs allow the subordinate to obey without emotional involvement or intellectual conflict because commands are generally given in an incremental fashion of frequent and slight adjustments allowing for their facile assimilation at an almost subliminal level. In this way, the potential for moral crisis or ideological confrontation is removed allowing for the functioning of complex administrative structures that bury the notion of responsibility within a distributive network of duties and rituals. This 'distribution of responsibility' is an essential characteristic involved in the functioning of many modern social and political structures.

Both Elias and Foucault discuss important issues concerning the effects of power on the societal configurations of man. Elias asserts that the ultimate configuration emerging from these symmetrical interchanges is a system of interdependence which binds the lives of those involved in an intrinsic manner. Constraint within such a system surfaces from the very nature of the mutual reliance of all the individuals and groups involved. Thus, power and freedom are descriptive terms for the conditions involved within the circumstances effected by the 'figural processes' of Man's social activities.

Foucault, on the other hand, places the notion of power in opposition to freedom, for when there is an exercise of former, the latter is usurped. Since power is stated to be exercised *over*

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., Pg. 6.

freedom, the dynamics of this relationship is asymmetrical. Though Foucault's emphasis on power as governing is not without merit, the claim that this is its predominant characteristic places too great an importance on its relation to *dominance* at the expense of its connection to the notion of *capacity*. Though there is a contention that both positive and negative effects can come about with the exercise of power, it is still largely conceived as a negative force of coercion and dominance.

Moreover, both authors are seemingly correct in their assumption that some characteristics generally attributable to power surface within specific contexts as effects which are experiential, but the question still remaining is whether or not such depictions portray *all* the intrinsic qualities involved in the essential nature of power? Can there be an *affectual* aspect to power which is beyond the empirical faculties of humans? The theories of Foucault and Elias were postulated largely from investigations into mankind's social interactions leaving open the possibility that certain connections might have been overlooked pertaining to the possibility of an attribute of power residing within its intrinsic being. It could be this aspect which constitutes the transcendental component constituting a fundamental existent power's essential nature.

An indication that there may be such a consistency surfaces when one begins to move past the effects manifested by overt exercises of power that formulate and reinforce social configurations and seeks a broader perspective. The surface appearance of power's effects may transfigure from circumstance to circumstance, but the rationale and intentions behind them seemingly remain consistent. The needs of, and reasons behind, the exercise of power have remained constant since humans began to congregate and form societies for protection. The implicit problems surrounding the notion of power are as prevalent in texts such as *The Republic*, as they are within the discourse of modern times. Even with the rapid advancement of the human technological capabilities, certain attributes of Man's nature has remained constant, seemingly unconnected to such advances. The verification of this *implicit* attribute of power is not easily discernible through direct experience, and it is the potential discovery of its fundamental characteristics which invites conjecture upon its affectual aspects.

### *The Affectual Nature of Power*

Akin to the paradigm of power within Hobbes's 'state of nature',<sup>31</sup> is the conception of power as explicated in the texts of Friedrich Nietzsche. His idea of power, is based on the premise that it is a fundamental attribute of the 'will'. This concept of 'will' is conceived as the perpetual striving towards the satisfaction of desires underlying all human emotions and sentiments.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, the will is seen to be "an insatiable desire to manifest power; or the application and exercise of power as a creative instinct, etc."<sup>33</sup> Accordingly, power and will are inextricably bound together as *the Will to Power*, which is considered the fundamental ontological ground for the essential inner nature of the human animal in its impulse to overcome the resistance of the objective world.

Moreover, this concept not only describes an essential component of the human condition, but is considered by Nietzsche to be the fundamental driving component inherent within the ultimate reality of the world, both in the literal and metaphorical sense. It is the essential underlying force in the perpetual process of self-affirmation of all life contained within the world. Within this reality, life is seen to be a perpetual struggle to overcome the obstacles an entity encounters. If such difficulties are not overcome, they will cause such a being to cease to exist. For in this world there are the conquerors and the vanquished, with the concept of self identity emerging when this impulse overcomes or gains mastery over itself and others. However, the *will to power* does not refer to the concept of self-preservation, but to the avaricious inner-most striving to extend ones' sphere of influence. It references the incessant need for growth towards a greater complexity that continually increases a Being's capacity to command its surroundings. It is the tacit and vital creative instinct which serves as the root force contained within the principles of the empirical sciences, though not readily discernible within the realms of their methodologies of description. This element correlating to power is actually partially concealed from our empirical capabilities, but innate to all movements,

<sup>31</sup>See Hobbes, Pg. 64-65. "Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man; the same is consequent to the time, wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength, and their own invention shall furnish them withall. In such a condition, there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no Culture of the earth, no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious Building; no Instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts, no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.

<sup>32</sup>Robert Litke, "Violence and Power" in *International Social Science Journal*, February 1992, Pg. 196. As Litke points out, in the *Leviathan* Hobbes considers power to be in essence, "the ability to satisfy ones desires."

<sup>33</sup>Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will To Power*. (Edinburgh: T. N. Foulis, 1910) Pg. 110.

appearances, and laws of nature contained within the world. Thus, all such processes must be understood in connection with this inner will or phenomenon.

So, according to Nietzsche, the traditional view of Nature is falsely portrayed as being the embodiment of a some harmonious state. In his conception of the world, life contained within its parameters consists of an infinite series of individualistic conflicts and struggles between entities or beings unified under the common characteristic of willing, or in other words, a universal will. This all-encompassing will is, ".....every combination of forces, defending itself against the stronger and coming down unmercifully upon the weaker."<sup>34</sup> Thus, the *Will to Power* is the eternal willing, striving, or struggle between conflicting entities forming the infinite combinations that constitute the world:

"The will to Power can manifest itself only against obstacles; it therefore goes in search of what resists it--This is the primitive tendency of the protoplasm when it extends its pseudopodia and feels about it. The act of appropriation and assimilation is, above all, the result of a desire to overpower, a process of forming, of additional building and rebuilding, until at last the subjected creature has become completely a part of the superior creatures sphere of power, and has increased the latter--If this process of incorporation does not succeed, then the whole organism falls to pieces; and the *separation* occurs as the result of the will to power: in order to prevent the escape of that which is to be subjected, the will to power falls into two wills."<sup>35</sup>

It is through this struggle or conflict where all life forms discover the essential nature of their Being. It is here that the *Will To Power* discloses itself as the propelling force behind the act of Becoming. An act entrenched within each singular individual will and constituting in the end, an ultimate universal will of self-affirmation. It is "the original form of *affect*,"<sup>36</sup> which is the foundation for all other forms of affect. When Nietzsche speaks of this will it is never taken as being an *effect*, in terms of a singular event or exercise, but always as a reference to a manifestation occurring within the complex configuration of numerous *effects*. This leaves open the possibility of it transcending the empirical capabilities of men and their abilities to fully comprehend it.

To understand the intricate nature of this concept, it is imperative to understand Nietzsche's thoughts concerning the notion of *will* or *willing*. According to his description, the 'will' and the 'will to power' are essentially the same force or process, for they are a form of 'self-willing'. Therefore, when he speaks of 'will', it is not in the traditional sense of its being an

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<sup>34</sup>Nietzsche, Pg. 130.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., P. 131.

<sup>36</sup>Martin Heidegger, *The Will to Power as Art*. Vol. I. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981) Pg. 45.



aptitude or strength located within the soul, but is a complex notion relating to several descriptions simultaneously including *affect*, *passion*, or *command* and unified within this singular term. The will then, is essentially a reaching out, a striving to extend or project oneself beyond its present state. Willing is always directed towards an object, it is a striving towards *something*. There cannot be *pure willing* or a *pure will*<sup>37</sup>, for included intrinsically in the notion of will is the object of its striving (See chapter 4). Willing in the form of a projection or mastery beyond an entity that wills is the inherent force which brings such an entity to *power*.

*Willing reaches out beyond itself... Will is intrinsically power, it is mastery over.... The will to power doesn't have a meaning per se.*<sup>38</sup> Consequently, if someone is confused or uncertain as to what is desired, no act of will is involved, therefore no will. Since the will is intrinsically connected to its object, it is impossible to conceive of one without the other. Power can never be an object of the will, because it is a characteristic of the will's striving towards its immediate object, not an ultimate goal. In essence then, every act of will is a willing towards increasing the sphere of influence of an entity. With such an increase of influence, comes the amelioration of an entity's inherent capacity. Consequently, out of such willing comes a sort of *command*, both in terms of the fundamental existent of being and its surroundings. This continual act of striving towards expansion is the essential nature of the *will to power*.

By this conception, one seemingly cannot over-emphasise the impact that such a notion has upon the very essence of Man's being. It is through this action of willing, this eternal drive to enlarge our sphere of influence towards the satisfaction of desire, which reveals itself in the surge of pleasurable emotion involved in its achievement. This feeling emerges as the self-affirming process revealing the essential nature of Being as Becoming. These assumptions led Nietzsche to base his theory on the notion of a perpetual conflict in regards to humanity's

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<sup>37</sup>Nietzsche claims that Schopenhauer's concept of will is erroneous because he conceives the will as a thing-in-itself. Thus, the object to which the will is directed is outside or separate from it. "....every particular act of will on the part of a knowing individual (which itself is only phenomenon of the will as a thing-in-itself) necessarily has a motive, without which the act can never take place. But just as the material cause contains merely the determination that at such a time, in such a place, and in such a matter, a manifestation of this or that natural force must take place, so also the motive determines the act of will of a circumstance of a knowing being, at such a time, in such a place, and in such and such circumstances, as something quite individual; it by no means determines that being wills in general and wills in this way. That is the expression of his intelligible character, which, as the will itself, the thing-in-itself, is groundless, for it lies outside the province of the principle of sufficient reason." See Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*. Vol. I. (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1969) Pg. 163.

<sup>38</sup>Heidegger, Pg. 41.

instincts towards freedom. Like Hobbes, he claims that it is out of this collision of drives towards the satisfaction of individual desires that forges the nature of social relations. Hence, those social structures are merely manifestations of this attempt at regulation, for the will gains its freedom through the self-realisation process of expressing its power and reaching its unbridled potential. Consequently, the overt conflict and violence amongst men are just the outward expressions of this inner will. For; .....*Life is only a means to something: it is the expression of the forms of growth in power.*<sup>39</sup>

Therefore, the *will to power* is seemingly beyond our capacity to experience the totality of its effects because it rests within the inner nature of men and is largely out of reach of human perception. This transcendental existent is too intrinsic to the human condition for us to fully comprehend, too involved in our very nature for the detachment needed to discern the total extent of its characteristics and manifestations. Though, Nietzsche disagrees with Schopenhauer on several points concerning the will's relation to its object, nevertheless, they seem to be describing a force with metaphysical connotations:

"The unity of that will here alluded to, which is beyond the phenomenon, and in which we have recognised as the inner being of the phenomenal world, is a *metaphysical unity*. Consequently, knowledge of it is transcendent, that is to say, it does not rest on the functions of the intellect, and is therefore not to be really grasped by them. The result is that this unity opens to the consideration or abyss whose depth no longer grants an entirely clear and systematic insight, but only isolated glances that enables us to recognise this unity in this or that relation of things, now in the subjective, now in the objective."<sup>40</sup>

Such a conception diverges greatly from the more sociologically based conceptions of power supposedly discernible by empirical means. Nietzsche's exposition of power seeks to take our understanding of it beyond its overt manifestations within the social sphere towards uncovering its essential nature as the ontological existent of Being.

### ***Power, Metaphysics, and Experiential Relations.***

On the surface, the claim made by Nietzsche, that there is a component to power which exists beyond its phenomenal appearance, is divergent from the views of Foucault and Elias. The relational account denies that power contains any transcendental notion, instead depicting its exercises as effects contained within the institutional structures of society. With this

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<sup>39</sup>Nietzsche, Pg. 175.

<sup>40</sup>Schopenhauer, see Vol. II, Pg. 323.

assertion, the question concerning power rests simultaneously on the issues surrounding the notion of the capacity of a group or individual to take autonomous action. It is a question entailing an investigative technique which places non-scientific philosophical investigation to one side and endeavours to rest its initial premises on events readily discernible to empirical analysis. What is called for here then, is a scientifically-based methodology describing the structural paradigm of social interdependence. The effects of this interdependence are said to be experiential, therefore observable. Power is not a hidden existent located within human nature or on the essential level of all existing beings, it refers to the systematic distribution or restriction of the freedom to carry out autonomous acts.

In reality, this assertion rests on a superficial reading of certain philosophical methodologies, especially in regards to enquiries concerning notions of ontology and metaphysics. Whereas the relational view seeks to describe the nature of power from the observation of particular practices or events, the theory of the *will to power*, is seeking to uncover the intrinsic connection *between* such manifestations and their relation to our essential existence revealed to us by experience. Though it may not be possible for mankind to move completely beyond experience, there are other paths towards the discovery of such characteristics contained within the world. As Schopenhauer asserts, the experiential whole of the world can be envisioned as being in the form of a "cryptograph", and it is the task of philosophy to unravel its mysteries. The validity of this decoding process can be confirmed by the associations and continuity that appears at various instances in our everyday experience:

"Accordingly, philosophy, is nothing but the correct and universal understanding of experience itself, the true interpretation of its meaning and content. This is the metaphysical, in other words, that which is merely clothed in the phenomenon and veiled in its forms, that which is related to the phenomenon as the thought or idea is to the words."<sup>41</sup>

Consequently, the essential nature of Being does not have the potential to sever itself from experience and it is the task of a philosophical method to attempt to interpret experience, not from the nature of the particular, but from the standpoint of the universal. As Man's capacity for knowledge concerning the particular expands, so too does the demand for an explanation of the connections relating such experiences. Contrary to the declaration made by Elias and Foucault, a more refined method of empirical observation of particular events involving the exercise of power will only demand an exposition of the fundamental linkage and causes behind such occurrences. As in the case of history, the unfolding of a particular event may be

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<sup>41</sup>Schopenhauer, Vol. II, Pg. 183-184.

discerned by the study of evidence that providence has left, but it takes an act of speculation to relate the ramifications of each particular event to others in order to measure its effects on the overall course of history. As our knowledge concerning particular events becomes increasingly more refined and encyclopaedic, the complexity of the elements effecting the human condition become all the more incomprehensible and in ways mysterious, thereby increasing the need for an understanding of the systematic connections constituting the world.

Given this, the inference made by certain critics<sup>42</sup> that Nietzsche's conception of power rests on some grand strategy based on a 'metaphysics of conflict' is a interpretation that is rather suspect in regards to the endeavour of metaphysics. Usually when describing a strategy, one is indicating that there is an overall intention or plan directed towards some pre-determined goal. With the concept of the *will to power*, there seems to be no such overall systematic goal *per se*, but only a series of singular entities pursuing their own individual goals. Each individual entity is striving to acquire more and more influence over its immediate field of possibilities and it is these efforts of extension on the 'micro' scale which have the potential to develop power configurations through an implicit process affecting the characteristics of the world on the macro scale. This idea is similar to Adam Smith's concept of the process of the *invisible hand*. Elias's relational account stems from a very similar premise, thus leading one to believe that such theories are implicitly connected. The interpretation of the endeavour of metaphysics surrounding this assertion is somewhat superficial and seemingly portrays its goals in a tainted light. In an attempt to overcome this discrepancy, it is the assertion of this study that the relational method and the 'metaphysical' conception of power only differ by degree and not in essence, for they are both seeking to discern the characteristics of the same subject.

### ***A Conjecture on the Essential Nature of Power***

The discussion concerning power to this point has encountered two recurrent themes contained within the various positions involving this subject. The first asserts that power is an affectual existent of Being within the world, while the second claims it to be an effectual characteristic emergent within the social apparatuses of men. Though these theoretical divisions seem openly apparent when one first encounters several of the methodologies

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<sup>42</sup>See Burkitt, Pg. 57.



investigating the subject, they are speaking of elements essentially contained under the same theoretical 'umbrella'.

These divisions within this discourse stem from several persistent problems<sup>43</sup> arising within attempts to provide a clear and coherent explanation. The overriding obstacle in this matter is the multitude of variance surrounding the actual clarification of the constituent components encapsulated under the term, *power*. As a result, there are several subsidiary problems attributable to this primary dilemma. The first concerns the intrinsic confusion surrounding the different interpretations of the term, what is entailed when a group or individual is said to obtain or have it, and the ramifications involved in its exercise. Further, there is the related difficulty emerging from the complexity of the circumstances involved surrounding the emergence of any features pertaining to an essential referent of power. This complexity blurs the boundaries between the external and internal issues implicated and conceals certain aspects of power thereby making them indiscernible even when it appears that all the necessary information can be ascertained through empirical means. These obstacles aid in obscuring the notion of power and the specification of the important components that could constitute that possible definition.

Underlying these impediments are two reasons that reinforce and perpetuate these difficulties in ascertaining the true nature of power.<sup>44</sup> Firstly, there is not a singularly identifiable component which adequately describes the multi-faceted nature of power. Despite claims made to the contrary by advocates of the relational view of power, evidence gained through empirical observation does not contain the ability to prove or disprove assertions that power contains an aspect akin to a transcendental phenomenon. Also, it cannot prove definitively that the extent of the parameters of the concept lies in the notion of human relations and the actions taken corresponding to them. Secondly, this obscurity also stems from the fact that power plays a central role within the philosophical discourse concerning the human condition and the fundamental logic behind the emergence of our social, political, and cultural configurations. The primary impetus of the relational account of power addresses the former reason by discussing the overt effects and exercise of power, while the metaphysical account attempts to tackle the latter by trying to discern the nature of power as the ultimate foundational affect or cause, to which all other affects are derived.

From this, two views emerge that signify the two main issues addressed in most theoretical approaches attempting to decipher the mysteries encompassing the concept of power. In

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<sup>43</sup>D. M. White, "The Problem of Power" in *British Journal of Political Science*, October 1972. Pg. 480.

<sup>44</sup>White, Pg. 484.

reality, though they are addressing different aspects of power, most ultimately claim to speaking of the only truly relevant aspect of power. However,, what is being addressed by one view can be termed the *means*, while the other is more concerned with the *impetus* of power. Proponents of the view that power resides within the relations and apparatuses of the socialising forces incorporated into human civilisations are interested in the *means* which manifest the apparatuses of power. Such theories are not concerned strictly with the notion of how power is manifested, but what social relations and apparatuses serve as a means for its exercise.<sup>45</sup> In theories such as Foucault's, power is said to be exercised *over* subjects or agents (as opposed to things), that are essentially free. This notion equates directly to implications concerning coercion and domination. Here, the interest lies in the complete social structure of actions in relation to the regulation and constriction of the field of possible actions contained within the social realm. Hence, power is exercised when certain agents manipulate this structure to gain control over the actions of other agents. By this view, *dominance* and its effects are the more important components in correctly describing the concept of power, thus, inadvertently downplaying the issue of *capacity*.

Nietzsche's view depicts power as the manifestation of *capacity*, i.e., the potential for self-realisation. With the notion of the will to power, Nietzsche is describing a universal capacity of Being to undertake a process of the dynamic affirmation of life. Although he stands accused by his critics of proposing a theory praising the virtues of war and domination, the *will to power*, when isolated from Nietzsche's other work, seems to speak more in terms of the inner capacity to overcome the resistance of the external environment. It is the ability to transcend the given conditions of the past and present by striving to capitalise to the fullest extent possible the latent potential contained within the intrinsic parameters of this Being. Therefore, the argument for the *will to power* is describing the *impetus* of power, or in other words, the fundamental root of all reasons behind actions undertaken by the various life forms contained within the world. By this, power's fundamental referent indicates an entity's capacity to realise its ability to live in a unique manner. It is this notion that the contention of its being 'the universal *affect* of life'<sup>46</sup> sets out to illustrate.

Such positions inherently reside within the Marxist and Liberal traditions of thought. By insisting that the intention behind an action relating to an 'inner nature' is an irrelevant concept because the characteristics of the agent are determined by the forces comprising the socio-

<sup>45</sup>Dreyfus and Rabinow Pg. 216-217. See also J. G. Merquior, *Foucault*. (London: Fontana Press, 1991) Pg. 109.

<sup>46</sup>White, Pg. 485. The author equates the concept of *affect* with notions such as *determining*, *producing*, *causing*, or *influencing*.



historical context of its existence, the relational argument for power utilises the historical determinism prevalent in Marxist thought. The inmost characteristics of an agent are inevitably determined by the cultural structure in which it is enmeshed, so its actions are determined ultimately by the cultural structure, and it is the analysis of these structures which should take precedent. This stance indicates an emphasis being placed on the socialising process of the societal superstructure which encompasses the notion of power, not the agent.

Within the liberal tradition of thought, the 'self' is conceived as being intrinsically free and ultimately responsible for its own actions, over and above the external causes of its environment. This notion of an intrinsic element of autonomy plays the key role in determining the definition of power. The 'inner nature' of an agent correlating to the notion of a 'will' is self-contained and separate from psychological desires and social norms. The will in its essential state is isolated and free to determine its destiny, but such an endowment also carries with it a burden of responsibility. An individual contains the innate freedom and power to take actions that further its interests and inadvertently increase the capacity for autonomous action. By resting power on the notion of *capacity*, faculties such as the human imagination begin to emerge as a fundamental component of power relating to the part it plays in our actions.

Both of these theories seem to be accurate in their basic assumptions relating to power, but somewhat misguided in their claims of exclusivity.<sup>47</sup> Power is simultaneously involved in the *capacity* for self-expression and the *dominance* involved in the limitation of the field of possibilities for action, either by others or by cultural apparatuses.<sup>48</sup> Consequently, a dialectical aspect emerges between these two prevailing aspects of power. To claim either supersedes the other is to fail to give an adequate description of the essential nature of power. Therefore, the total phenomenon of power cannot be described solely on either metaphysical or empirical grounds, but only through a combination of both. The relationship of power and freedom must be seen to reside in individual agents containing a matrix of individual capabilities (capacity), that comprise the essential attributes embedded within an overall

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<sup>47</sup>Lukes, *Essays*. Pg. 29.

<sup>48</sup>See Felix Oppenheim, *Political Concepts: A Reconstruction*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publisher Ltd., 1981) Pg. 29. The author distinguishes between two types of power relations relating to the two types identified here. The first is a two term relation of power correlating to *ability*, or within the context of this argument *capacity*. This is illustrated by the formula; 'P has power to do X'. The second designation is a three term relation of social power which equates to the notion of *domination*. This aspect is described as; 'P has power over R's doing X'. Also, see John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. ed. A. S. Pringle-Pattison. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934) Pg. 136. Locke discerns between two types of power, one active and one passive. The former implies the 'ability to make', the latter, 'able to receive, any change'.

structure of potential opportunities and constraints (structure and dominance). No theory of power can successfully describe its subject if it relies entirely on the intentions contained within the inner nature of individual agents or likewise, purely on effects emergent within the relations inherent to humanity's socio-historical structures. For the essential nature of power resides in both simultaneously.



### **Chapter III:**

#### ***Paradoxes and Connections***

With the definition of the fundamental characteristics of the concepts of power and utopia, certain aspects begin to surface concerning their potential in producing positive and negative consequences. In short, the impulse underlying utopia, contains the ability to envision theoretical objectives which can instigate changes to the institutional structures of a society. It undertakes such action through the provision of incentives in the form of images portraying a community's potential. However, if pursued blindly or with malevolent intent, this same impulse can serve as a vehicle to tyranny and social violence. In this guise, it becomes a device of deceit, utilised to misinform rather than inform. Power also contains a similar duality of potential in that it has the ability to produce situations of social harmony or discord depending on the implicit intentions behind its exercise.

Due to the close proximity and relationship of the undercurrents of power and utopia within the workings of a society, there is the real possibility that the egoistic nature of power will overtake and utilise the utopian impulse cynically for the purposes of maintaining or increasing its control. The utopian imagery can succumb to this drive by becoming merely a means for those seeking to manipulate the mass psyche. If this occurs, the utopian paradigm betrays its

eternal ideals, and serves only to legitimise the theories and actions of the dominate ruling ideology.

To avoid such pitfalls and to utilise the potential advantageous traits that a proper balance of these forces could bring, it is imperative to understand the dynamics of the relationship between the images projected by the social visionary and the praxis of existing power structures. In regards to uncovering the positive attributes of this interrelation, several enquiries must be made into its nature, extent, and possible effects on the social structures of Man. The enquiry concerning this matter will focus on issues involving the positive and negative influence that latent utopian desires can have on a society and its inhabitants. A second, will embark upon uncovering the positive and negative effects arising from the actions undertaken by existing power structures and the potential of their interaction with these idealised depictions. After exploring these issues, a final line of questioning will strive to indicate certain potential connections between these forces and will guide the remainder of the investigation.

In short, to commence such enquiries, a two-fold methodology emphasising, in the first instance, the inherent duality of each of these concepts, and in the second, the dynamics of their potential connections, will be utilised. These connections will explore the potential of these forces in order to attempt to envisage a means of eliminating as many malevolent effects as possible while maintaining the potential capacity for producing beneficent effects when these forces interact. With such information, this study can then move towards examining the issues influencing this interrelation and its contextual parameters within the varying levels of existence constituting the human condition. Towards this end, we will begin by uncovering the paradoxical nature of the utopian impulse.

### ***The Paradoxical Character of Utopia***

As mentioned previously, there inhabits a spirit within the mental structures of Man that perpetually beckons deep-rooted impulses desiring certain transformations to the existing reality. These aspirations demand purposeful interventions directed towards the realm of the future by perceptions grounded within the present. It is this ability of multi-temporal habitation which allows Man to incorporate the knowledge of his ancestors into his labours within the present in an effort to transform his future horizon. This innate multi-dimensionality has enabled mankind as a species to project its intentions with a greater impact

pertaining towards the transformation of its surroundings than any other species of animal to date. With this composite mental structure; Man, the creature of the present attempts to surpass the obstacles of this realm and venture into the unknown dimension of the future. No other species contains such a refined ability for abstract thought and speculation, an endowment which affords the opportunity for purposeful intervention with the goal of changing the surrounding environment.<sup>1</sup> Given this, Mankind's true reality is not only multi-dimensional in the spatial, but the temporal sense as well. For its nature is divided between the given of the past, the perceptions of the present, and the potential of the future.

This complex mental structure has brought truly beneficial aspects to human existence and has allowed the capacity for formidable achievements. However, it also produces an impulse with the potential to enslave humanity with an incessant striving for change, regardless of the cost. Because of this, imprudence can avail and disastrous events causing great hardship can emerge serving only to disillusion individuals instead of enlightening them in regards to their latent potential. To uncover the potential effects of the paradoxical<sup>2</sup> character of this force it is imperative to accentuate utopia's intrinsically positive traits as well as the negative. In regards to the positive, utopia contains the capacity for conveying the notion of *truth*, indicating the potential *fecundity* of a circumstance, and endows mankind with a certain *power* towards changing a societies' perception of itself and its future possibilities. Contrary to this positive nature, is its ability to damage the psyche of a society through its inherent *deceitfulness*, illustrating *vacuous* instead of real potential, and thus leaving a society paralysed and disillusioned. Upon such an occurrence, utopia becomes a purely cynical or flaccid social force, *impotent* in regards to bringing about necessary social and political change.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See John Locke, P. 89. Locke defines the notion of abstraction as; "...whereby ideas are taken from particular beings and become representations of all of the same kind; and their names general names applicable to whatever exists conformable to such abstract ideas". He goes on to declare that this faculty distinguishes Man from other species of animals. "If it may be doubted whether beasts compound and enlarge their ideas that way to any degree, this I think, I may be positive in, that the power of abstracting is not all in them, and that the having of general ideas is that which puts a perfect distinction betwixt man and brutes, and is an excellency which the faculties of brutes do by no means attain to."

<sup>2</sup>See R. M. Sainsbury, *Paradoxes*. 2nd. edition. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) P. 1. The author defines the notion of paradox as; "An apparently unacceptable conclusion derived by apparently acceptable premises. Appearances have to deceive since the acceptable cannot lead by acceptable steps to the unacceptable. So, generally, we have a choice: either the conclusion is not really unacceptable, or else the starting point, or the reasoning, has some non-obvious flaw." In regards to the notion of utopia, many of its proposals seem straight-forwardly simple and therefore the consequences entailed predictable. However, the issues it dwells upon are infinitely complex owing to their involvement within the social sphere, thus, making prediction an altogether uncertain endeavour. When discussing the notion of power, similar issues arise due to its simple appearance, but complex nature.

<sup>3</sup>Paul Tillich. "Critique and Justification of Utopia" in *Utopias and Utopian Thought*. ed. by Frank E. Manuel. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company., 1966) Pg. 298 - 301. The description of the dual

## I. The Positive Attributes of the Utopian Impulse

The first of these positive attributes associated with the notion of utopia is its innate capacity to express certain *truths*. It achieves this by revealing certain attributes of Man's essential nature. This process of revelation is undertaken with the disclosure of the fundamental objectives inherent to its existence. By portraying the aspirations of humanity, utopia can depict the future as it could or *ought*<sup>4</sup> to be, in correlation to its innate desires. These future images stem from perceptions located within the context of the present, which transforms them through the faculty of the imagination into the specification of the idealised characteristics of an alternative future. In this process, these images serve as signifiers of reform contained within a society. Many of these possible changes could allow a multitude of individuals to fulfil the potential of their existence by informing them as to the true possibilities contained within its nature.

The definition of such images must occur simultaneously on two levels; the social and the individual. The complete separation of these two realms of existence is impossible owing to the incomprehensibility of one without the context of the other. Consequently, the essential truth that a utopia can describe is forfeited if its aspirations are directed towards a sense of fulfilment on an individual level while failing to address the ramification of such a goal at the social level. The converse situation is also true. For the essential fulfilment of human nature must occur seamlessly throughout the various realms of its existence if such a state is to be reached and perpetuated.

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potential of utopian thought follows a comparative description of the positive and negative effects associated with utopia.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Pg. 298-299.

<sup>4</sup>See Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies Volume I: Plato*. Pg. 237, Note 18(1). Popper attacks this notion as being one of the basic motives of 'scientific' ethics as expounded by moral philosophers such as David Hume (See *Hume's Enquiries, Concerning The Human Understanding and Concerning The Principles of Morals*. ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893, Pg. 134-8, 234-46). Popper claims that such notion rests on the fact that humans can act with intelligent foresight and given the fact that men can ask what their aims ought to be, they should be able to determine how they ought to act. He states that since this implies some form of "good" or the possibility of its definition, any reliance on such terms for a notion of morality is actually a form of escape. He also equates the utopian socialist's belief in the powers of reason as a formidable basis for predicting outcomes of social action as suffering from a similar case of naiveté. As indicated below, the notion of a "good" places an important role in the definition of the intention behind the exercise of power. This notion is implicit in Hobbes's discussion of the subject and follows the Aristotelian tradition of asserting that underlying all actions is an intention towards the attainment of some form of "good". (See Ball, Pg. 398, also Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapter 11.) Popper's criticism is more thoroughly addressed in chapter 7 of this text.



Additionally, the utopian impulse can bestow positive effects on a society relating to the *fecundity* of its social consciousness. This aspect describes utopia's implicit capacity for uncovering prospects that would normally be overlooked by other societal factions or individuals. If such prospects were lost or repressed, a valuable critical apparatus would be lost, allowing a multitude of social ills to persevere though the knowledge and resources might exist to solve them. The indication of the latent potential of certain social or political institutions can serve to enlighten a society to specific values that might have been lost or forgotten. In this role, utopia serves as a conscious-raising device in regards to uncovering these traits which can unlock a social structure's potential.

Finally, corresponding to these preceding notions is a further positive characteristic of utopian thought that can alter existing social conditions by endeavouring to transform the perceptions of the present by events located in the past. It achieves this through the mobilisation of certain latent desires grounded within the inner nature of individuals or the dynamics of collectives constituting the social fabric of a society. This is the *power* of the utopian impulse, for the drive towards the materialisation of its ideal images serves to perpetuate the necessary process of change. These images provide the ideological basis for focusing the strengths of diverse groups contained within a society towards the manifestation of communal goals

Moreover, these positive aspects underlie utopia's capacity to instigate changes aimed towards the future horizon within its surrounding context. This capacity can enable the conquering of obstacles within the cultural given of the present by spawning a discontentment that perpetually seeks the modification of these existing elements to manifest better conditions. Coupled with these contextual signifiers is a further causal component that is grounded within this transcendental restlessness that spurs Man towards the discovery of the true nature of his existence. This discontentment reveals itself in the characteristic of hope and fixes its gaze incessantly towards the future through the anticipation of events located on the verge of the next temporal horizon. Thus, utopia influences the human condition both externally and internally, from the temporal context of each individual's lifetime to the entire continuum of the existence of humanity.

The two-fold character of this influence can also fracture Man's nature and cause friction to arise between the security stemming from the *known* contained within the present, and the ardent creativity fired by the *unknown* of the future horizon. The conflict surfacing between these passions demands a choice, with the utopian impulse desiring the potential of the latter despite its dangers. This choice to pursue the potential of the future is made at the outset by a

small contingent of innovative spirits and can eventually spread to infect and motivate the masses, mobilising them under the banner of a common cause. Paul Tillich sums up the energetic nature of these advocates heralding the potential of the future in with his statement; "The bearers of utopia are those who have sufficient power of being to achieve progress....those who are able to transform reality, and it is in them that the power of utopia is anchored."<sup>5</sup>

## *II. The Negative Aspects of the Utopian Impulse.*

Coupled with the advantages that such a speculative faculty can furnish are several dangers. These effects may not necessarily be connected to explicitly malevolent intentions, but such practices can nevertheless have negative, if not disastrous consequences on the social realm. It is this pernicious potential that has often been overlooked or misjudged by its proponents. To understand fully the potential that the utopian impulse contains in regards to transforming the existing institutions and structures of a society, this darker side must be addressed as well.

Consequently, the utopian impulse contains the ability to project misinterpretations involving the potential of a given reality which deceives rather than informs. These disingenuous depictions appear when a utopia ignores two fundamental characteristics of human nature; its *perpetual estrangement* and *finitude*.<sup>6</sup> The former is a pre-condition of Man's existence and describes the continual occurrence of circumstances where the actual state of Being differs from its essence. When such events transpire and a utopia overcompensates for their appearance, it has forgotten that this alienation forbids humanity from attaining an existence corresponding directly to its essential nature. Therefore, if a utopia proposes that such a state can exist absolutely, it projects a false truth based on a mistaken perception of the nature of existence. In reality, the proposal that such a state of Being can be manifested where this perpetual disaffection is transcended is an unlikely prospect.

By proposing this, the utopian imagery is placed in a flagrant position of self-contradiction because its fundamental presupposition that man can be led out of this condition of estrangement, contradicts the reality of his potential. In other words, there is no real possibility for the materialisation of a static state of perfection where man exists in complete fulfilment, at peace with both his inner nature and the surrounding environment. The foundation for such a conception rests on a series of mistaken interpretations forcibly grafted

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<sup>5</sup>Tillich, Pg. 299.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., Pg. 299.

onto the reality of Man's existence. Closer to the truth, is the fact that it is impossible to shed this intrinsic element of estrangement completely because it breeds the very impulse which leads mankind to speculate upon future possibilities. When a utopia forgets this, it neglects one of the defining characteristics of Man's *finitude*. By ignoring this characteristic and claiming to contain the means to allow an escape from this condition, it serves only to spawn a sense of disillusionment and reinforces the cynicism leading into a protracted state of social apathy.

The emergence of such events leads to another negative aspect, the potential *emptiness* of the utopian impulse. This prospect stems from the capacity that utopia can have for depicting irrational dreams as being real possibilities. In doing this, it fails to perceive these images for what they truly are; wishful fantasies. Such representations focus on compensating individuals for the social ills placed upon them instead of enlightening them as to the differing possibilities which could rectify these problems. If a utopian falls prey to this depiction of meaningless psychological atonement, the resulting product is deceptive instead of constructive, because it is not portraying remotely feasible objectives. Such depictions are akin to fairy tales or daydreams and are grounded within the reality of the real world only in the sense that their imagery is brought on by a discontentment towards the conditions of the surrounding environment. When in this mode, the utopian impulse produces unhealthy and self-defeating fantasies seemingly devoid of any true relevance, but presented in a guise making them seem like realistic perspectives. It is within this context that the division between a 'visionary' and a 'dreamer' becomes most apparent. Such wishful thinking serves only to exasperate the dissatisfaction with existing condition instead of proposing possibilities lessening its presence. This aspect of exaggerated wishfulness must be overcome for the exercise of the utopian imagination to be brought down from the realm of pure fantasy to that of critical theory.

The third and final component pertaining to the negative potential of utopia is its possible emergence as a weakened or spent force. This final trait refers to the *impotence*<sup>7</sup> of the utopian endeavour. Such an occurrence carries the capacity to neutralise any beneficial effects or influence that a utopian vision might have on existing social configurations. It stems from a loss of creditability ensuing from repeated events where utopia's wishfulness has produced false hopes leading to a protracted social frustration. Over time these recurrent digressions build into a burdening disillusionment which goes beyond the psychological to effect Man's essential state of Being and is passed to subsequent generations. With each successive generation the estrangement becomes more acute until the latent cynicism it breeds eventually

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., Pg. 300.

destroys many of the positive cultural forces within a society. As a result, cultural stagnation and a gradual social decline ensues. This pessimism is perpetuated as long as the utopian promises within the culture are considered as ultimate goals or ends. An inherent trait of utopianism is its contingent nature, and it is this trait that sustains the dynamic qualities of utopia's transitive disposition. Ignorance of this inherent characteristic produces the false belief that the depiction of the *static* state of perfection portrayed by many utopias is not only attainable, but can be maintained indefinitely. This drive towards a static absolute ultimately fails to bring any positive changes to a community and only succeeds in generating this destructive cynicism.

When faced with these negative elements, it is a natural response to recoil from the notion of utopian speculation, but to do so is to risk losing its potentially positive influences. In reality, however, a society cannot choose to endeavour towards such risks because ultimately, they are the only options available. A culture must create its own aspirations through such a process, or be forced to accept the ones fabricated by other cultures. The moment a society foregoes its desire to experiment with life for a perceived state of certainty and security, its vitality is lost and a social atrophy soon besets it.<sup>8</sup>

Subsequently, the potential of a utopian movement is its ability to demand an unconditional faith towards the realisation of certain social objectives. The drive towards the realisation of such goals can bestow an additional richness to the human dimension which cannot be replaced. It is this striving towards the realisation of intrinsic desires and needs which strikes at the very core of the social structures that simultaneously order and enrich the human condition. If such drives are removed, so is a large portion of humanity's *raison d'être*. Without the sense of hope driving the utopian impulse, the chance that many of Mankind's greatest aspirations will be manifested is greatly diminished, leaving its intrinsic existence barren and unfulfilled. Such aspirations are at the heart of the creation of the social and political structures of humanity and the danger of losing them is a risk that most societies can ill afford to take.

### ***The Uncertainty of Power***

Power carries a similar potential in producing both positive and negative effects on the conditions falling within its sphere of influence or control. Such occurrences are similar in

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., Pg. 302.



structure, but differ in effect to the ones surrounding the attributes of utopia. Both power and utopia are related in that they are driven by underlying intentions seeking to satisfy various desires conceived in the form of a "good". However, the ones closely related to the concept of utopia seem to be inspired by a more altruistically-based motives, while the those behind power are more egotistical in nature.<sup>9</sup> The true spirit of the endeavour towards the manifestation of utopia rests on aims which seek to bring about conditions asserted to be "common goods", such as societal configurations alleviating scarcity or other pressures provoking conflict. Its production of certain evils are generally unintentional by-products arising from oversights associated with over-zealousness.

The drive for power focuses more on the satisfaction of individual or groups desires and tends to be more ego-centric in nature. Its intended goals are often conceived purely in reference to the interests of those exercising power. If this drive is taken to the extreme, the cost in natural, human, or financial resources, becomes irrelevant to the task at hand: the increase of an individual or group's domination. Nevertheless, though these drives contain tendencies that can produce instances of great tragedy and loss of life, they can also deliver beneficial effects to a society as well. Further, power is an intrinsic element necessary to the very existence of the communal structures at every level of human existence. Thus, it is an imperative element contained within the notion of co-operation that serves as the foundation of Man's social interactions. It is this puzzling notion of power serving a kind of necessary, but potentially pernicious organising element, that this section will set out to uncover.

In the first instance, it is necessary to uncover a primary causal characteristic relevant to the exploration of its paradoxical nature. This feature relates to the fact that though it may appear altruistic at varying times, power is a purely egoistic force. If the objectives and goals of the predominate power structure coincide with the *real* interests of the majority of the population, they do so only coincidentally. It is incapable of harbouring wholly altruistic motives and if left unchecked, will pursue its own ambitions regardless of the cost. Because of this jealous nature, it utilises surrounding resources to undermine other social forces or groups it perceives as threatening its influence. Such maintenance requires a great amount of energy and resources, thus forcing such a structure to focus primarily on the problems and perceived threats of the present, or at best, the immediate future. These limitations produce a lack of vision concerning the future and the intrinsic values it harbours. Eventually, if such a state persists, a power structure falls into a marked decline. Its natural inclination to offset such

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<sup>9</sup>Bertrand de Jouvenel, *On Power: The Natural History of its Growth*. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1993) Pg. 136-137.

events is to resort to a methodology of terror and violence in order to maintain its hold on a society. At this point, a governmental structure has lost all capacity for bringing beneficial effects and therefore its legitimate claim to rule.

Such occurrences begin to indicate the dual possibility surrounding the exercise and structures concerned with power. By this, it materialises in one of two distinct forms. Concerning the first, it is a social necessity because it imposes order and creates harmony, allowing for the betterment of men's lives through communal co-operation.<sup>10</sup> Without power, there could be no social configurations, because the order established by its presence allows men the ability to co-operate, a trait essential to the successful completion of complex tasks found within a social and political structure. In regards to the second, power can be a social menace, not a manifestation of reason, but a kind of organism with a mind of its own. By nature, it utilises pre-existing human structures and manipulates them to achieve its own purposes.<sup>11</sup> When its purposes and objectives begin to outweigh all other considerations, the effects of its exercise begin to have a negative impact on all involved except for those instigating its activity. Its machinations are directed towards gaining control for the sake of fulfilling the desires of the ruling elite regardless of those held by its subjects. Thus, similar to the potential surrounding utopian speculation, the use of power involves certain potential attributes as well as dangers, nevertheless it is a necessary component for the functioning of a community.

### *I. The Positive Attributes of Power*

In relation to its being a necessary element in the constitution of social and political configurations, the notion of power affects the social structures comprising the human condition in two ways. In the first instance, its most overt expression comes from its manifestation in the form of authority with this trait serving as the foundation to which all civilisation is based. Without it, the highly intricate nature of the social configurations of humanity would scarcely have developed to the integral complexity that they have reached in the present day. There can be no society of men without a certain tempering of the most extreme manifestations of human passion. Such temperance can only come about through

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<sup>10</sup>B. de Jouvenel, Pg. 313.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Pg. 314.

discipline, and authority is the overt expression of a governing body's attempts to temper such traits.<sup>12</sup>

The aspect of authority is seen to be pluralistic and mediated by various social forces and interests embodied within the structural institutions of the family, professional guild, church, and political groups, of a society<sup>13</sup>. In its primary function, authority reinforces the values held in high esteem by the members of a society, as well as providing a basis for their expression in the form of institutions that enforce prevalent moral views. Through the containment of certain individual desires and idiosyncrasies, a framework of rewards and punitive measures develops designating acceptable norms and practices. The predominant manifestations of this system surfaces as laws, rules, cultural norms, and common peer pressures relating to each level of social interaction.

Power then, in its most overt presentation as authority, is indistinguishable from the essential fabric of a societal configuration. It not only emerges through the procedures of the state or the written passages of law, but is contained within all cultural facets of a community and finds its fundamental basis on the values legitimising its existence. Without this relation to the intrinsic moral beliefs of the social sphere, authority loses this factor of legitimacy and must resort to ruling with violence or force, thus foregoing any chance of real freedom emerging within its jurisdiction. To truly claim such legitimacy, it must be placed within and adapt to, the context defined by the norms and values of groups of secondary authority like the family or education and religious institutions. The tension created by this reflexive action between the State and the influence of such secondary groups is the essential ground for any claim to legitimacy that a ruling structure might have as well as the most effective defence against its potential abuse.

Stemming from this first positive element is a second, which focuses on the reciprocal nature of the relationship between the emergence of the identity of the individual and the opportunities and resistance presented by its surrounding environment. A member of a community discovers its self-identity through a process of resistance to the restraints enforced by the authority figures regulating a specific social context. Prior to the appearance of this resistance, a individual must perceive its self-identity as bound to others inhabiting the same conditions of collective existence. The structures that define this existence are larger and more

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<sup>12</sup>Robert Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*. (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1970) Pg. 150-162. Within the text, Nisbet describes the French social theorist Emile Durkheim's assertion that this necessary process of social discipline is in actuality; 'authority in action.' See also, Emile Durkheim. *Moral Education: A Study in the Theory and Application of the Sociology of Education*. trans. Everett K. Wilson & Herman Schnurer. (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1950) Pg. 31.

<sup>13</sup>Nisbet, P. 153.

permanent than that of the individual, having existed prior to it, and will seemingly remain after its disappearance. Upon such a revelation, the objectives of an individual move from a purely introverted state to one where its existence gathers significance in relation to the existence of the community as a whole. Through the realisation of this sense of belonging to an entity that is both larger and more enduring than itself, an individual's existence is injected with renewed meaning that transforms its social orientation. Within the context of this discovery, the fundamentally human sentiment of solidarity with the community emerges.

The point being emphasised here is essential, because Man as an inhabitant of the social realm is incapable of aligning his individual aims and objectives with the higher aims or values of a complex social entity if this sense of belonging is absent. For men to willingly submit to the control of an authority, this sense of belonging to an entity on a higher plane of existence and the feeling of security it evokes is imperative. So, to relieve all social pressures is to abandon the individual to a state of isolation which is both immobilising and demoralising. Therefore, the structures of society develop the individual psyche and sense of self identity to a far greater extent than could ever be achieved within a state of isolation. An individual may forego certain freedoms relating to the demands of a social structure, but in doing so, the quality of his or her life will be far richer and more varied than if it inhabited a condition of solitude. Thus, an intrinsic part of the definition of the human identity arises from the interaction with others in a collective which exhibits signs of a distinct permanence and security. It is within the context of this identification that a loyalty emerges enabling the individual to sacrifice its own needs for those of the community as a whole.<sup>14</sup>

## *II. The Negative Potential of Power*

Related to these positive attributes are several aspects that can lead to repressive and tyrannical circumstances. Durkheim aptly describes the dual nature of power by his statement; "Whilst society thus feeds and enriches the individual nature, it tends, on the other hand, to subject that nature to itself and for the same reason."<sup>15</sup> This excerpt clearly illustrates the possible consequences if a dominant power structure is left unchecked. Left purely to its own ends, power will become despotic instead of delivering any beneficial effects to a society. A powerful entity such as a State apparatus innately contains the tendency towards the oppression

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., Pg. 160.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid. See also, Emile Durkheim, *Professional Ethics and Civil Morals*. Trans. Cornelia Brookfield. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957) Pg. 60.



of individuals it rules, i.e., those it sought to nurture in the first instance. In order to avoid the manifestation of such traits, the secondary forms of authority including the church, guild, or family, must serve as ideological foils to the exercise of power of the state apparatuses. They must arrest this highly ambitious side of power if a social harmony is to be maintained. However, power innately seeks its own growth and focuses solely on its immediate interests by removing or at least undermining these other authoritative groups in its persistent efforts to gain full control over the individuals and institutions of a society.

If this balance begins to heavily favour the interests of one faction, widespread instances of repression may begin to appear and a general decline in the personal freedom of individuals commences to emerge. The higher aims or goals of the state become separate from the needs or desires of those individuals under its jurisdiction. Thus, they lose the freedom to resist its actions and can become lost in the vastness of its apparatuses which do not have the ability to replace the 'sense of community' needed for the flourishing of the individual spirit. If an extensive governing body becomes highly successful at undermining the control of these secondary authorities it impairs its own vitality because the disillusionment and intellectual uniformity produced by such actions erodes its position and strength. A social atrophy sets in, and the vitality of the overall culture begins a downward cycle of decline ending in the stagnation of the creative spirit of the community.

When the reputation of an authority becomes entrenched in this cycle of decline it begins to lose its legitimacy. The further this decline progresses and the more attempts made to project itself as legitimate, the more it relies on its image of strength to maintain support. In reality, however, this entity becomes purely a hollow shell of imagery clinging to a dwindling base advocacy. As this becomes more and more apparent, it suffers a dramatic loss of faith amongst its subjects as the principles that serve as the foundations of its rule begin to crumble until it becomes a weak illegitimate manifestation relying on hollow rituals and tradition for its survival. It is at this point that one of two events will emerge, either this waning authority will be overthrown by a more consolidated power or it will seek to maintain its control by resorting to campaigns of violence, oppression, and terror. With the implementation of such measures, the indispensable affinity between the state and the individual is destroyed and its restoration usually only comes about with the utilisation of revolutionary measures. Such procedures do not necessarily end the reign of terror of the preceding regime, because traditionally an inadequate power is replaced by a more efficacious one that only continues or even amplifies the actions of its predecessor.

To avoid such consequences, it is critical for an existing power structure to have numerous spheres of influence distributed evenly throughout the various levels of a society. In this way, the ambitious nature of each authority can be placed in check by a subsequent collective of equal strength. It is imperative that a certain amount of friction in the form of social resistance is maintained between these differing types of authority to offset the repressive drive for control intrinsic to the very nature of social interaction. Such singular drives for control must be aligned with creative drives for change to provide the basis for a lasting cultural ascendancy and social harmony within a society. The endeavour to achieve this must focus on creating and maintaining a flexible equilibrium between the dynamic forces of the existing power structure seeking to instil discipline, and the creative spirit of innovation expressed by certain individuals or groups within a society seeking change. To begin to comprehend how the relationship between the forms of creative innovation embodied within the utopian spirit and the disciplining force of power serve to influence events within the social and political realm, it is imperative to lay bare several significant parameters of their interaction and explore some of the consequences emerging from this interrelation.

### ***Prospective Connections Between Power and Utopia***

As has been shown within the discussion in the preceding sections the forces surrounding power and utopia have the ability to bring about both positive and negative effects within the social and political sphere of a society. Such effects are not easily predictable due to the highly complex and transitive nature of each of these drives. This condition of unpredictability is further heightened by the fact that these forms are fundamentally intertwined within a relationship of reciprocal influence. Owing to this intrinsic complexity, the true parameters of interaction of these forces are difficult to grasp with any definite clarity. However, though taxing, some inroads can be made into ascertaining the nature of many of the possible avenues and implications concerning this interaction. An imperative first step to uncovering pertinent material concerning such issues is to set forth the question which will serve to guide this exploration. Therefore, our central question will be: What are the hierarchically important characteristics of this relationship and how do they interact to influence the essential practices and events intrinsic to the human condition?

This study thus far has found that contrary to its traditional conception, utopia must not be considered a state, but a process of criticism illustrating alternate futures or locations. Such a

process draws intuitively on the latent desires harboured within the inner nature of persons comprising a particular social and political structure. If such images are cultivated conscientiously, they become more than just manifestations of wishful yearnings or fantasies contained within the faculty of the human imagination, but become speculative explorations indicating possible social configurations founded on measures designed to overcome the insufficiencies of the present. Such theoretical paradigms have the capacity to direct Man's attention towards the possibility contained within the future horizon and serves as an impetus for the innate creative passion underlying the drive for social and political innovation.

Whereas the utopian enterprise is more speculative and inhabits the temporal environs of the future horizon, power, on the other hand, is steadfastly fixated on the events and conditions of the present. Its locus is founded upon the sequence of events unfolding within this temporal circumstance and the emergence of certain consequences relating to the friction between varying groups or individuals. Due to this, there is a certain emphasis on praxis contained within the nature of power which is in direct contrast to the theoretical loftiness of the utopian endeavour.

Power, in its relation to *capacity*, is aligned with the notion of expending energy in order to overcome or surpass both internal and external resistance. Therefore, where utopia centres on the indication of possibilities, power relates to the striving and actions that could bring such objectives into existence. These tendencies towards praxis are also prevalent in regards to the other facet of the impulse to power, that of *domination*. The manipulation of other individuals or collectives for the satisfaction of egoistic tendencies can impede power's ability to look beyond the urgency of its immediate interests. To preserve control, the *status quo* must be maintained, so those governing will rarely take the initiative in altruistic or potentially unpopular actions unless forced into a position where this is imperative. It is this tendency towards the stifling of all initiative that must be kept in check or power's aggressive nature will enslave the very individuals who initially supported it.

It is the potential of producing negative effects by each of these forces in isolation that might be overcome by a balanced interaction between them, one tempering the proclivity towards an extreme exhibited by the other. As a result, the possibility of oppressive governing actions leading to a social stagnation can be offset by utopia's ability to serve as a penetrating tool of criticism and impetus for social reformation. Likewise, the praxis-oriented outlook associated with power can temper utopia's tendency towards becoming too removed from actual conditions that can render its proposals irrelevant as constructive social critiques. With each of these forces, if left to their own devices, individual lives and social structures can be

damaged or potentially destroyed. Therefore, by contrasting these respective strengths it can be possible to overcome the weaknesses intrinsic to each force. In order to achieve such measures, it is crucial to understand how the dynamic forces underlying power and utopia interact at the various levels of defining Man's existence.

To discover how this interaction influences the human condition, it is imperative to move beyond the definition of these concepts towards investigating their relationship on numerous levels including the metaphysical, socio-political, and historical. To this point, the concepts have been analysed separately, for the purpose of clarifying the essential characteristics of each singular concept. As will become more apparent in the subsequent phase, these drives are actually intricately connected components unified within the fluid temporality involved in the process of civilisation. They are implicit complementary elements comprising the often turbulent force of dynamic social change and innovation. An exploration into this integral relationship can lead to crucial insights into both existing and potential social configurations as well as methods in which disparate individual desires are forged into unified movements with singularly directed aims or purposes. Towards this end, our investigation will focus on the implications of this interrelation within the context of the interaction of Man's inner subjective nature and the external reality of the World.



*Book II: The Interaction of Power and Utopia Within The Human Condition.*

## **Chapter IV:**

### ***Friedrich Nietzsche and Ernst Bloch: Power, Utopia, and The Metaphysics of Existence***

The primary theme which arose within the first part of this text pertained to the possibility of the cultivation of the latent potential of a society through the dynamic interaction of the forces underlying power and utopia. For a society to reach to its full potential these must be in an equilibrium which aligns the strengths of each force in a complementary and constructive manner. When this occurs, this relationship can project future images that directs social actions which can deliver beneficial reforms to an existing social context. In this integral relationship, the utopian component projects certain ideas in the form of objectives that can provide the ideals and values that serve to guide a society's social and political practices. The forces underlying the concept of power use such images to align the political mechanisms needed to create and implement certain programs that can bring such ideals to fruition. In this way, the fluid interaction of these forces can perpetuate a continuous cycle of progressive renewal.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ernst Bloch, "Karl Marx, Death, and The Apocalypse" in *Man on His Own: Essays in the Philosophy of Religion*. trans. E. B. Ashton. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970). Pg. 36. The conditions of this "strength against strength" relationship introduced in chapter 3 and which will be explored more fully in this section is described by Bloch in an essay on Marx. In this text, he states that; "Dominance, or

Though such a process contains the possibility of producing a great many beneficial effects, if this equilibrium is lost, these same elements have the capacity to generate events with extremely negative consequences. Owing to the inherent complexity of this relationship and its paradoxical character, it contains the innate ability to instigate changes that can have both beneficial and detrimental effects upon the structures of a society. Therefore, it is these same forces which can bring necessary social reform that can also evoke such events as war, revolution, or oppression. Under such conditions, promises of a 'golden age' can and do habitually fail to materialise because the intentions underlying these images are contrary to the spirit of the values that are supposedly upheld.

Underlying this interaction at the social level, is the integral connection between man's inner subjective nature and the objective reality of the world. When exploring how power and utopia interact on the social level, several questions immediately surface pertaining to the influence and effects that such a relationship has upon the inner nature of the individual. How does this interaction affect the intrinsic parameters of its existence? Does it have an effect upon Man's subjective interpretation of the objective world reality or the intrinsic temporality contained within the essential nature of his Being? If so, how does this influence the traditional conceptions of the individual within the metaphysical, political, and cultural spheres? By addressing these questions, many of the implications surrounding the assertion of this study that this association is a central basis for the formulation of political ideologies as well as the subsequent social configurations arising from them, begin to surface serving to reinforce this claim. Therefore, the task of this chapter will be to uncover the essential qualities of the involvement that these forces within the intrinsic Being of the individual and its actions within the reality of the world.

In an effort to clarify many of the primary issues surrounding these questions, the theories of Friedrich Nietzsche and Ernst Bloch will be critically compared. Through this exploration, the extent to which these forces influence human existence within the varying moral, political, and metaphysical levels will be brought to light. While on the surface, the political views and philosophies of these two thinkers appear radically different and a comparison between them

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power in itself, is evil; but it takes power to counter it. The categorical imperative must carry a gun wherever and for so long as power can be crushed by no other means; and wherever and for so long as anything diabolical maintains its violent resistance to the (undiscovered) amulet of purity." This seems to be a workable assumption, but one which seems not to go far enough. In answering the age old question; "who will then guard the guardians?", the answer seems to point to the very element of power that was in the first instance conquered. Therefore, resistance must be reciprocal, fluid in nature, and perpetual for a truly healthy society to exist.

might appear to be a strange endeavour, upon closer examination many connections and similar issues begin to arise. Nietzsche's project sought to radically reassess the role of metaphysics by overcoming what he considered an artificial dualism perpetuated within many traditional theoretical frameworks that have caused modern man to turn away from the true nature of reality.<sup>2</sup> This dualism arises from the absolute nature of the moral ideals of good and evil which aid in the perpetuation of a fallacious perception of the world as being founded on static moral absolutes. With the formulation of theories such as *The Overman*, *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, and *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche sought to overcome the resentment of man towards the authentic nature of reality through a systematic implementation of the *Transvaluation of Values*. This system set out to describe the necessity for the continual interrogation of the conventional wisdom of the values, moral structures, and beliefs of men.

In relation to this proposition, Nietzsche was also concerned with two primary issues in regards to the social and political dynamics of human society; the persistent friction between the notions of culture and politics and the integral justification of economic activities through the polemical opposition of the forces behind the events intrinsic to social exploitation and domination. Such theoretical interests lead him to envisage a radical social hierarchy in the form of an artistic aristocracy where the uniquely talented are allowed to ascend above the 'multitude', forming an elite class that could perpetuate the ascension of a culture.<sup>3</sup> To Nietzsche, it was the creation of culture, not social justice that should be considered the main concern of social and political configurations.

Ernst Bloch, while also attempting to develop a metaphysical system based on certain existential attributes, took a different approach in that he sought to rectify the problem of the spiritual emptiness endemic to the materialism found in traditional Marxist theories. Though he believed firmly in the major tenets of this thought, and asserted that the theoretical core of this philosophy was the potential liberator of the human race, he nevertheless sought inspiration for its spiritual revision from an extensive range of sources found within the varying disciplines of philosophy, literature, religion, mythology, and utopian thought. Through the transformation of the major themes discovered within this multi-disciplinary approach, he developed a metaphysical system akin to many of those formulated within the

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<sup>2</sup>Ofelia Schutte. *Beyond Nihilism: Nietzsche Without Masks*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press., 1984) Pg. 38.

<sup>3</sup>Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude To A Philosophy of The Future*. trans. Helen Zimmern. (Edinburgh: T. N. Foulis, 1909) Pg. 223. See also Keith Ansell-Pearson, *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., 1994) Pg. 4.



discipline of process thought.<sup>4</sup> The end result of this endeavour emerged as a utopian fusion of revolutionary Messianism that created a philosophy of perpetual renewal reliant on the mythical language of the human imagination as manifested in many religious and literary texts. It was through this synthesis of seemingly disparate concepts and language that he created a dialectical methodology aligned with traditions found within Marxism, but which extended its boundaries to incorporate a sense of spirituality grounded within the human trait of perpetual yearning.<sup>5</sup>

Given these quite distinct differences in the political and philosophical positions of each of these thinkers, the pertinent question remains as to why such a comparison should be made and what critical insights are to be gained if it is attempted? Through their respective studies into the essential nature of man, reality, and their interaction, each has touched upon the interrelation of the elements of power and utopia which presuppose the parameters of specific social and political ideologies. It is the insights into these aspects that will serve to reveal some of the crucial aspects of this fundamental interrelationship in regards to Man's interaction with reality.

Though each thinker formulated their theories from differing philosophical starting points; Nietzsche from a theory stipulating the essential nature of reality as power while Bloch carried out his explorations from a distinctly utopian perspective, their studies on the essence of the authentic metaphysical organisation of reality and Man's place within it contain an important conceptual overlap. This similarity begins to indicate that these forces are intricately connected within the dynamic process of change intrinsic to the fundamental reality of the world. Thus, within these parallels, is the conceptual ground for the formulation of the theoretical assertion that the subjectivity of Man's inner nature and the objective Being of the world are influenced by impulses related to the notions of power and utopia. Therefore, the connection of these forces serve as the impetus for the constitution of human social, political, and cultural configurations. Hence, it is through the comparison of the utopian-based theories

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<sup>4</sup>A major advocate of this philosophical outlook was the British scientist/philosopher A. N. Whitehead. Roughly speaking, according to his view, reality was seen to be comprised of entities which are basically individual processes of self-creation intertwined within a procedure of selection and reformation of the material intrinsic to their context. When this process of self-actualisation is complete, the entity then becomes 'background material' for the next generation undergoing their process of self-actualisation. See A. Flew, ed. *A Dictionary of Philosophy*. (London: Macmillan Press, 1983) Pg. 374. See also, A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*. (New York: The Macmillan Press, 1929)

<sup>5</sup>Wayne Hudson, *The Marxist Philosophy of Ernst Bloch*. (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1982) Pg. 6-8.

of Bloch and the power-based theories of Nietzsche, that the full extent of the relationship of these two forces pertaining to the essential level of Man's temporal existence can be outlined.

Initially, to begin this procedure, it is imperative to explore several of the similarities contained within the respective philosophical methods of these writers. The first of these, concerns the corresponding attempts by both Nietzsche and Bloch to fuse questions of existence, history, and culture, within a theoretical context that is simultaneously political and metaphysical. To both philosophers, questions involving the essential condition of Man's existence cannot be separated from questions concerning the composition of his social and political surroundings.<sup>6</sup> As a result, both theorists consider the formulation of Man's subjective nature to be reliant on external as well as internal influences.

A similar intention is to be found underlying their respective arguments asserting that the metaphysical reality of the world and humanity's existence within it is not static, but essentially fluid. A central line of thought contained within both arguments is that all the parameters of the objective world reality are involved in an eternal process of renewal or 'flux'<sup>7</sup>. The notion of this reality being locked in a continuous cycle of change underlies such a conception, thus rendering any *static* moral, social, or metaphysical designations intended to provide an intrinsic sense of security lacking in authenticity. According to this conception, humanity, as well as all the other entities within the world interact in a dynamic manner to simultaneously affirm and define the nature of the subjective inner 'self' in relation to the outer objective world. And finally, each philosopher contends that the fulfilment of Man's potential requires his ascendancy to a primary creative role in the transformation of the surrounding reality, and that such a position is an essential part of discovering the intrinsic character of this reality. Confirmation of the true state of reality and humanity's role within it, must therefore be measured in relation to the creative endeavours of mankind's attempts to transform it.

To ascertain the implications of this relationship and the inherent roles that the implicit drives for power and utopia play in the definition of the subjective nature of the individual, it is imperative to uncover their influence within the system of thought expressed by each

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<sup>6</sup>Hudson, Pg. 8. Also see Ansell-Pearson, Pg. 5.

<sup>7</sup>See Heraclitus, *The Cosmic Fragments*. ed. G. S. Kirk. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954) Pg. 369-380. Heraclitus is credited with first describing this notion of "flux" within the fragment of his text commonly referred to as the *river-analogy*. "Upon those who step into the same rivers different and again different waters flow." Pg. 367. Here, he is referring to the preservation of the identity of the river despite the continuous transformation of its constituent elements. This is due in large part to the systematic regularity and equilibrium involved in the intrinsic process of its change being analogous to metaphysical changes within the world. Pg. 366. (See also notes 65 & 66)

philosopher. Accordingly, the necessary first step is to outline and discuss the major components of each of their systems. This will give a clear indication of the primary intentions and overall content involved in each theoretical endeavour. It will then be possible to specify certain closely connected components underlying power and utopia within the context of the definition of Man's inner nature and its relation to the outer parameters of the world.

### ***Nietzsche: The Positive Attributes of Nihilism***

The body of work produced by Nietzsche is quite varied and fragmentary, but a thread of theoretical intention is expressly manifested in the form of several consistent themes throughout the whole of his work. A primary theoretical endeavour within his method was to explore ways of overcoming the inherent dualism contained within many of the traditional categories of philosophy. Due to this undertaking, the primary focus of a majority of his arguments was the adamant challenge issued towards the positivist assertion that the reality of the external world can be entered only through the accumulation of data gathered by the human faculties of perception. To Nietzsche, such a view carried a tendency to produce a series of categorical dualities which were actually explicative conventions, but ultimately claimed to provide an accurate picture of the foundations of reality. Such dualities are useful for the communication of concepts, but fail to provide an accurate explanation of the fundamental parameters of existence.

Accordingly, it is this notion of 'truth', depicted as an objective absolute waiting to be discovered and analysed, which Nietzsche sought to take issue with within the context his work. The view developed to counter this traditional conception was based on the idea that truth is intrinsically indeterminate and must be connected with the unfolding temporal process of the world. The act of valuation which man commonly refers to as 'truth' is only a necessary event allowing for the growth and maintenance of the species. Given this, Nietzsche asserted that a 'falsehood' bestowing some aspect on the human reality providing for the preservation of the species is as valuable as the greatest of the truths, for to renounce it would be to negate

life. So, the concept of 'untruth' is an equally essential aspect of the human condition as is an absolute 'truth', for without it Mankind could not exist.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, within the context of the potential absence of 'truth', he was arguing for a historically-contextualised philosophical perspectivism that recognised human existence as taking place within a world mediated and conditioned by concepts formulated by the subjective nature of Man as he attempts to master his immediate surroundings. Consequently any changes within this conceptual framework inadvertently transforms that reality in relation to his understanding of it.<sup>9</sup> So, any claim advocating a divinely-inspired or absolute truth causes humanity to turn away from the authentic nature of its reality, and forego the necessary role it must take as the creator of the conceptual paradigms that simultaneously determines and allows it to master its reality.<sup>10</sup> By dissolving the dependence of Western civilisation on the fictitious meanings perpetuated by the notion of eternal truths, Nietzsche felt the opportunity could then arise for a radical transformation of the underlying basis of Man's knowledge and his interpretation of the fundamental existent of reality. It was through these alterations that the necessary reassessment of the antiquated system of the traditional values of humanity would emerge to serve as the foundations for the creation of a newly emergent fluid system of values.

*We experiment on truth! Perhaps humanity will be destroyed by it! Well, so be it!*<sup>11</sup> Nihilism, according to Nietzsche's interpretation, is not a philosophical dogma which preaches the emptiness of human existence, but is in essence a doctrine of beginning. The advent of nihilism<sup>12</sup> was to be the historical event where man came to the realisation that there was no absolute meaning contained within life except the process of life itself. It is the point in time

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<sup>8</sup>Nietzsche, Pg. 8-9. Nietzsche's assertion within this context is laying bare the necessity; "*To recognise untruth as a condition of life*: that is certainly to impugn the traditional ideas of value in a dangerous manner, and a philosophy which ventures to do so, has thereby alone placed itself beyond good and evil."

<sup>9</sup>Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*. ed. Walter Kaufmann trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. (aph. 480.) Pg. 266-267.

<sup>10</sup>Ansell-Pearson, Pg. 15-16.

<sup>11</sup>Nietzsche, as quoted by Heidegger in *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art, Vol. I*. trans. D. F. Krell. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981) Pg. 28. *Op cit*; See *Grossoktavausgabe XII*, (Leipzig, 1905) Pg. 410.

<sup>12</sup>See J. Edie, J. Scanlan, & M. Zeldin, ed. *Russian Philosophy: The Nihilists, The Populists, and The Critics of Religion and Culture*. Vol. II. (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, Inc., 1965) Pg. 1-10. The term *nihilism*, refers to the attack mounted on the prevailing conventions of thought and existing social institutions in Russia by a group of literary critics utilising the philosophical foundations of utilitarianism and materialism. The main proponents of the doctrine were Nicholas Chernyshevsky, Nicholas Dobrolyubov, and Dmitry Pisarev. The word itself first emerged in Ivan Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* dramatising the split between the humanitarian sentiments of the 'fathers' and the scientifically-minded 'sons.'



where the reliance on a false destiny will be destroyed, revealing the potential avenue to an undiluted knowledge that beckons him to explore its actual parameters and implications. For it is this revelation at the dawning of a new horizon of opportunity where all will be permitted and humanity begins simultaneously forming and bestowing its own meaning to the world:

"Nihilism then, is the recognition of the long *waste* of strength, the agony of the 'in vain', insecurity, the lack of any opportunity to recover and regain composure-being ashamed in front of oneself, as if one had *deceived* oneself all too long. This meaning could have been 'fulfilment' of some of the highest ethical canon in all events, the moral order; or the growth of love and harmony in the intercourse of beings; or the gradual approximation of a state of universal happiness; or even the development toward a state of universal annihilation-any goal at least constitutes some meaning. What all these notions have in common is that something is to be *achieved* through the process-and now one realises that becoming aims at *nothing* and achieves *nothing*."<sup>13</sup>

Though constantly expounding the extremely liberating attributes of this doctrine, Nietzsche understood that coupled with these aspects were inherent dangers. This theoretical 'knife-edge' implicit to the doctrine indicates the intrinsic connection that the potential of creation has to the concept of destruction. On a fundamental level, the acts of creation and destruction are indiscernible as singular entities in polemical opposition, because they are, in actual terms, constituent components of the same process.<sup>14</sup> The notion of the creation of something directly coincides with the destruction of something else, giving every act of creation an inherent risk that something imperative to the existence of the present will be lost. This, however, is a necessary risk, for the sole alternative available is to turn away from the essential nature of reality and rely on fictional constructs of meaning. As Maurice Blanchot illustrates the rewards for such risks can be immense; "If man overcomes such temptation, by its own freewill and action, Mankind creates and delineates the parameters of its destiny."<sup>15</sup>

This doctrine underlies Nietzsche's proposal that Man is capable of, and *must* endeavour to continually enact a process involving the *Transvaluation of Values*. Such a process advocates the continual reassessment necessary to any system of beliefs. The dismantling of the outmoded value system is not seen as destructive but creative, for it provides the foundations for the construction of new value systems that correspond to the fluid temporal nature of the world. The perpetual transformation proposed by this concept would provide the ground for a

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<sup>13</sup>Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* (aph. 12A) Pg. 12-13. *Op. Cit.*; Ansell-Pearson, Pg. 38.

<sup>14</sup>Maurice Blanchot, "The Limits of Experience: Nihilism" in *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation*. ed. David B. Allison. (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press., 1988) Pg. 123.

<sup>15</sup>Blanchot, Pg. 124.

new breed of philosophers,<sup>16</sup> who are intrepid in regards to contesting the boundaries of the accepted truths of an epoch in order to create new methodologies for the accumulation of knowledge and the constitution of conceptual frameworks of theoretical interpretation.

But, who will comprise this new breed of creative philosophers? What doctrines or guidelines will direct their experiments? And what are the characteristics of the process reality involved in the 'economy of the whole' that they will seek to reveal? Nietzsche's answer to these questions lie in the central concepts contained within the *Transvaluation of Values*. With the laying bare of the constituent components of this methodology, such as the concepts of *The Overman*, *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, and the attributes uncovered by the further exploration of *The Will To Power*, many of the intentions behind Nietzsche's system can be uncovered and explicated.

### *I. The Will To Power: The Metaphorical Ground For The Knowledge of the New*

Within the earlier discussion involving the essential nature of power, the concept of the *Will To Power* was briefly discussed in relation to the possibility of power being described as containing certain metaphysical connotations. The present discussion will focus on ascertaining the characteristics of this conception within the context of Nietzsche's overall argument against the notion of absolute truths. The endeavour subsequent to his declaration of the vacuous nature of these valuations, sought to determine if a meaning to existence was even remotely possible. In other words, he set out to consider the possibility of overcoming the latent danger of a debilitating demoralisation emerging within the nihilistic message by setting out to explore the all important question within this context: Is it possible for Man to exist without a predetermined moral purpose or truth?

Nietzsche's answer alleged that though there was no ultimate 'meaning' to life in the terms traditionally depicted, Mankind should not allow a sense of *resentment* against its existence arise. It should perceive the nihilistic message as an impetus for the affirmation of the true

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<sup>16</sup>Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*. Pg. 7. Nietzsche asserts that this new breed of philosopher will not be afraid to address the dangerous notion of 'perhaps'. "It might even be possible that *what* constitutes the value of those good and respected things, consists precisely in their being insidiously related, knotted, and crocheted to these evil and apparently opposed things-perhaps even in being essentially identical with them. Perhaps! But who wishes to concern himself with such dangerous "Perhapses"! For that investigation one must await the advent of a new order of philosophers, such as will have other tastes and inclinations, the reverse of those hitherto prevalent-philosophers of the dangerous "Perhaps" in every sense of the term."

nature of Being within the reality of the world. Such knowledge allows Man to embrace the fundamental attributes of the world system, and to realise that he is an intrinsic part of a great and eternal process. This system is in a continual temporal fluctuation having no predetermined destiny or ultimate end, but merely exists. Given this, existence is the only absolute and incontestable fact within the context of Nietzsche's argument. However, this does not serve to direct an individual to an ultimate meaning contained within life itself. The essential principle denoting this aspect is the *Will To Power* and it is this concept which Nietzsche claims to be the fundamental drive underlying all the creative forces of life.

This metaphorical device is used to describe the essential principle that serves to explain the true nature of reality where singular entities are in perpetual conflict within the arena of the temporal process of the world. In other words, the 'will to power' *is* reality itself.<sup>17</sup> It is the fundamental ground for which the inner will of the essential Being of the world projects itself beyond itself and pertains to the primordial ground implicit in the act of self-overcoming. As stated earlier, this principle describes the fundamental *affect* whose intrinsic makeup is constituted by an infinite series of fluctuating effects. Within Man, this universal *affect* finds its essential ground within the attribute of the will.<sup>18</sup> And by Nietzsche's concept of the will, there must be a willing towards something, with this act becoming purer if the objective towards which the will is directed is left indeterminate. For a will to overcome or project out beyond itself, it must maintain a *resolute openness* towards itself through the projection of a continually *open* object. Only by this method can it attain a mastery *over* or a *surpassing* of the present conditions inherent to the definition of its Being.<sup>19</sup>

In the primary sense, this self-overcoming process of the will must begin externally because the object of the will inherently manifests itself outside the will, and in doing so, provides the basis for the definition of the will itself. Therefore, power can never be a goal or appendage of the will, for it is the act of will as self-mastery, self-overcoming, or willing out beyond itself, that releases the strength enabling the will to bring itself *to power*. The attainment of this sense of strength or power from the projection of the internal will into the objective world reality affords Man the opportunity to discover the inner-most essence of its Being. To quote Heidegger; "In willing we come towards ourselves, as the ones we properly are."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Schutte, Pg. 76-78.

<sup>18</sup>Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*. Pg. 25-28. See also Heidegger, (*The Will to Power as Art*) Pg. 37.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., Pg. 42.

<sup>20</sup>Heidegger, P. 52.

So it is this act of willing as projection which provides the sense of empowerment needed to define the true essence of Being. As the will achieves its sense of *mastery over*, the passion emerging from this act serves as a beacon indicating the path to the inner-most state of an individual entity's Being. Thus, the will to power is the perpetual process of self-overcoming, where if sustained, the feeling of power is enhanced and the pathway to the infinite creativity of life remains intact. It is through this continual access to the fundamental ground of Being that man's essential nature as well as his relation to the world is simultaneously defined and understood.

## II. *The Eternal Recurrence of The Same*

Within the text, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in an entry entitled "On The Vision and The Riddle", Nietzsche speculates upon the temporal process of the World:

"Behold," I continued, 'the moment! From this gateway, Moment, a long, eternal lane leads *backward*: behind us lies an eternity. Must not whatever *can* walk have walked on this lane before? And if everything has been there before-what do you think, dwarf, of this moment? Must not this gateway too have been there before? And are not all things knotted together so firmly that this moment draws after it *all* that is to come? Therefore-itself too? For whatever can walk-in this long lane out *there* too, it must walk once more.

And this slow spider, which crawls in the moonlight, and this moonlight itself, and I and you in the gateway, whispering together, whispering of eternal things-must not all of us have been there before? And return and walk in that other lane, out there, before us, in this long dreadful lane-must we not eternally return?"<sup>21</sup>

With this passage, the foundation is laid for Nietzsche's conception of the world process which all Beings contained within its reality are perpetually entrenched. For this passage is describing the *Eternal Recurrence of the Same* which portrays the infinite 'process of the whole' which holds no ultimate meaning or purpose outside the existence of the process itself. In other words, the only authentic justification for the incessant movements of creation and destruction contained within this cyclical process of change is the brute fact that it actually exists. Therefore, the *Eternal Recurrence* is the temporal sequence driven by the *Will to Power*, where what has been will manifest itself again in a process of perpetual reversal. It is the world's existence, where what is and has been will re configure repeatedly into what is to

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<sup>21</sup>Friedrich Nietzsche. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book For All and None*. in *The Portable Nietzsche*. ed. & trans. Walter Kaufmann. (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1976) Pg. 270.



come. This is the only underlying meaning behind the changes that are the manifestations of the temporal movements of the world.

But, this description is not based solely on an overriding notion of destruction, for intrinsically involved in this process is an important component of eternal creation. This depiction of the temporal structure of the world as "flux" or the perpetual reciprocal interaction between the destructive/creative forces, breaks down the conventional conception of the world as a series of static relations of extension. It replaces this with the conception of this cycle as a fluid process of eternally recurring, present spatial interactions of dynamic forces in tension. It is a process where these eternally recurring present moments are encompassing all the spent past moments and simultaneously projecting them as material resources for the future. In short, the *Eternal Recurrence* is the process where all that is, has been and will be, in a repetitive cycle of temporal movement trailing perpetually into infinity.

This process where the instances of time are circling back into themselves is the very essence of temporality in relation to Being. It describes the fundamental temporal ground for which the *will to power* inhabits and the revaluation of values must occur. It is within this context where "A 'should' does not determine Being; Being determines a 'should.'"<sup>22</sup> The challenge then, laid down for humanity by the notion of the temporal sequence of the *eternal recurrence* is to shed all fictions and blind ideals which rule human existence within the modern age, and face the essential reality of the world as the manifest *will to power*. It is only then that Mankind can be guided by the will that *wills* its existence creatively. To achieve this, the present state of humanity must be overcome. How is this present state to be overcome? Through the emergence of a new breed of human, an *overhumanity*.

### III. *The Ideal Type of Humanity: The Overman*

*I teach you the Overman. Man is something that shall be overcome....*<sup>23</sup> This prophetic statement is made by Zarathustra, the teacher of the 'eternal recurrence', in his description of a new breed of Man who will supersede the humanity of the present. It is the emergence of this figure which heralds a new type of human containing the capacity to leave behind the fictitious constructs of the past and embrace the authentic nature of existence within the reality of the world. This concept is probably the most misunderstood and misinterpreted conception

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<sup>22</sup>Heidegger, P. 29.

<sup>23</sup>Nietzsche, (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*) Pg. 124.

contained within Nietzsche's work, due in large part to its association with the National Socialist Party in Germany before and during the Second World War.<sup>24</sup> However, in reality, such associations were fallacious because the Nazi's claim of Nietzsche as their philosophical ideologue was based on fabrications and deliberate misinterpretations of his work. To begin to overcome this reputation and unravel some of the possible implications of this concept, it is imperative to make enquiries into exactly what or who is being described and how this idea fits into Nietzsche's overall system of thought. It is the final component in his attempt to lay bare the parameters of a possible existence beyond the categorical dualism of good and evil, affording Mankind the courage and ability to embrace the creative life endemic to the *Transvaluation*.

Who is the Overman? It is a new kind of human which exists beyond the static fictions of ordinary men and lives life in affirmation of the essential nature of Being. The Overman is the ideal type of individual who has *overcome* the moral fictions or superstitions that have hindered past and present Man in his attempts at reaching a fulfilled state of Being. This *Overhumanity* then, is the metaphorical device utilised by Nietzsche to describe a new breed of human who accepts that the underlying characteristic of the existence of all entities is *the will to power*, and that it is this attribute which inhabits the fundamental temporal ground of the *eternal recurrence of the same*. In short, the idea of the Overman is the description of the spirit of humanity after it has bridged the abyss of its potential non-being and embarked upon a journey which takes leave of its present state, freeing itself from its self-imposed constraints.

What are these conditions within the reality of the present which humanity must be overcome? Nietzsche asserts that "the last human" (present Man) must be delivered from its immediate state because it is engulfed in the spirit of *revenge*. Current humanity is locked in a perpetual state of vengefulness, which causes it to turn away from the true nature of reality as manifested in the 'will to power'. Therefore, at present, a huge expenditure of the essential life force is directed towards a characteristic of existence which cannot be altered because it is intrinsic to the very notion of Being. Within this context, *revenge* is exhibited as the aversion of the will towards its fundamental temporality. It rebels against the inevitability of the event where it will cease to exist and the profoundest symbols of man's antagonism towards this

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<sup>24</sup>For a brief introduction to the argument of Nietzsche's appropriation by the Nazi's, see Keith Ansell-Pearson, Pg. 24-34. For a defence of Nietzsche against the charge of Fascist or anti-Semitic tendencies, see G. Bataille *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings 1927-1939*. ed. & trans. Allan Stoekl, with Carl R. Lovitt & Donald M. Leslie. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989) Pg. 182-196. For a view opposing this perspective; see J. P. Stern, *Nietzsche*. (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1978) P. 83-84.

finite state of temporal existence, are the fictional accounts of reality as portrayed through the depiction of absolutes. Such descriptions ignore and fear the temporality of Being which inherently affirms its existence through the contemplation of the possibility of its non-Being.<sup>25</sup>

For a deliverance from this intrinsic aversion of the will towards its inherent temporality, humanity must accept the teachings of the eternal recurrence of the same. As Heidegger asserts in his exploration of the subject of the Overman; "Only when the Being of beings is represented to Man as the Eternal Recurrence, only then can man cross the bridge and, crossing over, be delivered from the spirit of revenge, be the superman."<sup>26</sup> Thus, it is only after such an event that the will to power, as the underlying characteristic of all life and the authentic representation of the transient nature of existence as Becoming, can be affirmed by Mankind. By Nietzsche's argument then, the 'Eternal Recurrence' is the crucial definitive description of the Being of all beings within the world, and it is within the revelation of the true characteristics of this temporal arena that humanity overcomes itself to emerge as an *Overhumanity*. Upon reaching this state, the essential Being of Man can then converse freely with the authentic conditions of existence within the World.

Hence, this idea is speaking of a new type of humanity which has seized control of its own destiny by seeking to comprehend the true nature of its existence and that of the world. It is not a description of a master race of men enslaving humanity and manipulating them brutally for the fulfilment of their capricious desires or a twisted logic, as was the case within the historical events surrounding the National Socialist's concept of the 'master race', but man's realisation of his own finitude. When Zarathustra speaks of this new breed of 'supermen', he is foretelling of an event where humanity comes to terms with its own finite existence, leaving behind all of its false ideals seeking to graft on to this existence a static system of absolutes or the dream of an infinite permanence. The emergence of the *Overman* signifies Man's overcoming of the intrinsic fear of its temporal existence. This event will not result in the enslavement of the 'last human', but its deliverance from the malevolent spirit of its own revenge. It is the embodiment of an ideal type of Man, one which seizes the true nature of existence and moves beyond it to live within its finite temporal span creatively.

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<sup>25</sup>Martin Heidegger, "Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra?" in *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation*. (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1988) P. 73.

<sup>26</sup>Heidegger, P. 74.

#### IV. *The Political Implications of The Transvaluation.*

The concept of the *Overman* then, is the literary vehicle utilised by Nietzsche to expound a doctrine of human agency that seeks encapsulate the nobility of the human spirit. It is the portrayal of the individual figure of humanity, which by embracing and overcoming the frightening nature of reality, is capable of heroic and noble acts. This act of affirmation regarding the true nature of life, enables an individual to challenge and reconstruct social and political value systems once considered as sacred or divine. Therefore, the *Overman* is the embodiment of the ultimate autonomous individual who has thrown off all the fallacious intellectual baggage of the absolute ideal and is allowed to live according to its instincts. Where the *last man* seeks only the comforts of the physical needs of its existence, the ideal spirit of this supra individual is willing to forego these to undertake creative acts of heroism.<sup>27</sup> Such an individual is Nietzsche's answer to the endemic problems of modern politics, because it is the embodiment of the spirit set to combat and overcome the spiritual decay of the conventional laws and customs of Man's present civilisation. Such a spirit calls for the re-evaluation of modern man's conception of the relationship between the state and the individual with the aim of discovering the 'great politics' of the age.<sup>28</sup>

These concepts herald insights advocating the formulation of societal institutions which are beyond those existing within the present that correlate to the dreams of a newly emergent existence over and above the judgements of the moral absolutes of the present. A different kind of society must emerge allowing the uniquely talented to rise to a position of prominence and privilege in order to lead the perpetual progression of the culture to new heights of creative achievement. Society as it stands now, must relinquish its reliance on the false conceptions surrounding the idea of social justice and accept that the true foundations of human societies rests on the social forces of dominance and exploitation. It is only through this realisation that the necessary elite class of creative individuals can give rise to events lifting a civilisation to new heights of artistic refinement. Thus, according to this conception, an individual doesn't contain any value to a society intrinsically, but must endeavour to achieve its worth either by attempting heroic acts or by giving itself over to the service of those attempting the construction of great cultural events or institutions. Therefore, if an individual

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<sup>27</sup>Ansell-Pearson, Pg. 106.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., Pg. 79.



is not capable of achieving such greatness, it should be placed within the service of those who contain the capacity for such actions.<sup>29</sup>

Consequently, it is at this point that a paradox begins to emerge in Nietzsche's thought relating to his narrow conception of an action that can be legitimately related to the noble spirit of creativity. On the one hand, by insisting the creation of singular heroic events are the standard in which to measure a society, he is lead to advocate an authoritarian social system with a hierarchical class structure. As many recent events within the twentieth century have shown, the ascendancy of a culture is often utilised as a claim legitimising actions undertaken by repressive regimes seeking to solidify their control. Given the manifestation of such events, there seems to be an innate danger that the very individual autonomy he sought to cultivate culturally, would be at risk of being repressed out of existence within the social and political sphere. As a result, the potential roots of totalitarianism seem to lie at the foundations of Nietzsche's conception of the emergence of an creative elite.

On the other hand, however, the ascension of the uniquely creative individual on the basis of their actions and abilities corresponds to the individualism endemic to many of the more conservative strains of political thought contained within the liberal tradition. The underlying intellectual premise found in his work that existence is inherently entrenched in a perpetual state of Becoming, and the assertion that Man must continually undertake a process of Transvaluation contain extremely liberating connotations. According to this challenge, all fixed absolutes and categorical boundaries of thought must be incessantly tested in regards to the legitimacy of their foundations. Within the social sphere, this translates into his claim that static divisions or fixed hierarchical orders based on fabricated ideals must be eliminated if a society is to reach its true potential.<sup>30</sup> This fragmentation of thought is similar to the notion discussed earlier in regards to the concept of power simultaneously encompassing the qualities of *capacity* and that of *domination*. Nietzsche's claim that the creation of culture must supersede the notion of politics does not overcome the paradox of power, but only focuses on the attributes of the former, while ignoring the dangers of the latter.

It is here that the full force of the paradoxical nature of Nietzsche's approach surfaces, because it serves as both the foundation and the primary undermining factor for the conception of his cultural order. It is this potential uncertainty which lies at the heart of the relationship of power and utopia, and burdens a majority of the utopian thought experiments within the

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., Pg. 51. This directly contradicts Kant's notion that an individual must always be considered an *end*, and never a *means*. This is also the departure point for Locke's Liberal doctrine.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., Pg. 55.

intellectual tradition of the West. To delve further into this issue, the focus of this study will now turn to the utopian perspective of the Ernst Bloch.

### ***Ernst Bloch: The Metaphysics of Utopia***

From the exploration of Nietzsche's theories illustrating the notion of the *Transvaluation*, the focus of the study will now shift to the exploration of the central tenets of the utopia-based metaphysical system of thought expounded by the revisionist Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch. This will be undertaken in order to uncover the connections between his *Open System* and Nietzsche's strategy for the emergence of a fluid order. The uncovering of such connections can bestow upon this endeavour another dimension of understanding to the central objective of this study, as well as shed light on the relation of the subjective nature of the individual and the inherent objectivity of the world from the utopian perspective.

Bloch's theories within the realm of utopian theory have been influential in several ways owing to their focus on questions surrounding certain beliefs concerning the functional aspect of utopianism in relation to the intentions underlying human action. In exploring this subject, Bloch considered basic questions connected with the essential qualities surrounding the human condition and the potentialities involved in its future. The primary component of his thought is founded on an element he claims to be an innate characteristic of the human psyche and is described as the *anticipatory consciousness*. This attribute enables Man to perceive certain aspects of the *not yet* in order to gain knowledge regarding future possibilities. By utilising this aspect as the guiding force of his exploration and adopting the fundamental premise of Nietzsche asserting the utility of the nihilistic tendencies of modernity, Bloch set out to challenge the traditionally theistic categories of philosophical thought.<sup>31</sup>

The development of a methodology for this renovation of the conventional views held concerning metaphysics, was based on the examination of the problem of temporality in correlation to the dismantling of the barrier separating the internal subjective experience of time and the objective temporality of the world. To Bloch, the intrinsic temporal experience of the subjective entity was intrinsically connected to the world, with the totality of this process being manifested within each singular instance of time.<sup>32</sup> Given this, Bloch felt that it was

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<sup>31</sup>Hudson, Pg. 30.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

imperative to consider the individual subject as an intrinsic and influential component within the unfinished objective world process. After recognising the importance of this interaction and the primary role it plays in the composition of reality, both in a metaphysical and historical sense, Bloch proposed a syncretic utopian philosophy resting on this interaction between the individual subjective consciousness of singular entities and the events constituting the objective world.

### *I. The Utopian Perspective*

The foundations for Bloch's theories involving this functional aspect of the utopian impulse are based on conceptions resting on certain theoretical suppositions formulated to express the central tenet of his argument; the *anticipatory consciousness*, and in his differentiation of two distinct correlates contained within the concept of utopia; one abstract and one concrete.<sup>33</sup> With the formulation of this distinction, he sought to discard the purely historical implications usually associated with the notion of utopia and began his exploration from the standpoint of an element embedded deep within the inner subjective nature of the human psyche. This component is utilised as the basis of his argument as it moves from the subjectivity of the inner nature of Man, towards analysing its potential effects on the external world. As was the case surrounding the discussion on Nietzsche, it is imperative to understand the primary intention behind the development of the entire system of Bloch's utopian metaphysics, thus it is important to examine to what extent his synthesis of politics, metaphysics, and aesthetics provides a unique and useful insight into the essential parameters of the human condition.

In order to formulate a new fundamental political and philosophical category where the notion of utopia plays a more central role, Bloch sets out to dispel some of the traditional critiques lodged against this discipline's major theoretical foundations. Much of the criticism towards it, develops its ontological premises from certain claims that the true nature of reality is a given totality, and that the utopian's production of schemes seeking to reshape its essential parameters, only indicates that the theoretical basis of utopia is not grounded within the *real* world of the present. Thus, its depictions actually seek to avoid the true nature of reality, instead of addressing real issues contained within it. Consequently, man's ability to effect

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<sup>33</sup>Refer to chapter 3, under the section heading of; 'The Negative Aspects of The Utopian Impulse'. With these distinctions, Bloch attempted to overcome utopia's potential of producing pure fantasy by developing categories which distinguished changes actually feasible within the circumstances of their creation from images largely misleading due to their innate abstractness.

changes within this reality are severely limited, and its dreams of perfection ignore the scientific facts proving its fallacious nature. As a result, utopian thought is irrational because it ignores the true nature of reality, which cannot be transfigured to correspond to reality as it is imagined within the minds of men. Such activity is categorically doomed to failure because the intentions underlying it, refuse to acknowledge the intrinsic limitations of humanity in regards to its capacity in transforming the immediate environment. Such activity produces only fictitious ideal representations which forego any actual opportunity for substantial change.<sup>34</sup>

Bloch's answer to such criticism rested on the assertion that the true nature of the objective reality is not necessarily given, nor as statically determined as the critics of utopian thought generally claim. According to his conception, the true character of the world reality is a fluid temporal process of continuous formation that is perpetually unfinished, indeterminate, or *open*. It is within the context of this 'open' reality, that the utopian impulse can overcome the nihilism endemic to modern man, who by surpassing the epoch of static moral and metaphysical absolutes, has proved them theoretically untenable. By projecting new goals, the utopian impulse can instil a sense of meaning allowing Man to undertake a greater influence in regards to shaping events necessary to the formation of the objective world.

Similarly, the charge of irrationality was contested by Bloch's illustration of the productive attributes of utopianism. He asserted that utopia's underlying methodology is actually based on reason and contains the unique capability of instructing Man in his inherent *willing* towards the fulfilment of his potential. It achieves this through the projection of images depicting certain possibilities which can break open the horizon of potential alternative futures and become a realistic impetus for social and political change. Seen in this light, the latent utopian desires underlying such images are to be conceived as much more than Mankind's misguided longings for some dream-like state of perfection, they are the essential ground of the fundamental ontological movements contained within the reality of the world. Since it is a world whose essential attributes are intrinsically unfinished, indeterminate, and open to new developments, humanity's actions and interventions take on an enlarged significance within the its process, affording it the capacity to make radical and extensive changes.<sup>35</sup>

With these assertions, Bloch has sought to overcome the historically contextualised function of utopia by basing his methodology on its transcendental qualities which can

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<sup>34</sup>Hudson, Pg. 50.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., Pg. 51.

influence the social and metaphysical definition of Man's existence. These characteristics are translated into symbolic representations describing vestigial desires found in human nature and thus, contain the capacity of indicating new perspectives pertaining to their potential manifestation. In depicting this essential utopian characteristic, Bloch has replaced the traditional problem of utopia, conceived as the expression of an ideal place or society, with a conception of utopia as a process concerned with the exposition of the 'inner' subjective yearnings of the individual within the objective context of the 'outer' world. In other words, the utopian impulse is conceived as an internalised paradigm that is materialised just in 'front' of Man's conscious faculties of perception which guides its endeavours within the objective world. The context for this activity is a world that contains the resources for the materialisation of this paradigm, and can only reach its destiny by this kind of human intervention. Such a relationship then, is the driving force behind the utopian function of the subjective consciousness within the indeterminate objective world as represented in the *Open System*.

## II. *The Open System*.

Within Bloch's metaphysical conception, Man, as the *open subject*, and the World are bound within a system containing an intrinsic attribute that is perpetually 'not-yet'<sup>36</sup>. Following in the tradition of Hegel, Bloch claims that due to its unfinished state, the true content of this world is 'not yet out'. The *Open System* then, is founded on attempts to discover a methodology of theory/praxis which will aid in the progress of the world process in its endeavour to uncover the essential content of its 'not yet', instead of attempting to impose upon reality a set of rigid categorical devices of explanation.<sup>37</sup> It aspires to envision a philosophical method which provides a sense of direction for Man towards a future-oriented

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<sup>36</sup>Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*. Vol. I. Trans. N. Plaice, S. Plaice, & P. Knight. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd. 1986) Pg. 196. Bloch describes this notion of the 'not yet' of the world and its connection to the inner self in the passage; "Of course, nothing would circulate inwardly either if the outward were completely solid. Outside, however, life is just as little finished as in the ego which is working on this outside. No thing could be altered in accordance with wishes if the world were closed, full of fixed, even perfected facts. Instead of these there are simply processes, i.e. dynamic relationships in which the Become has not completely triumphed. The Real is process; the latter is the widely ramified mediation between present unfinished past, and above all: possible future. Indeed, everything real passes over into the Possible at its processual Front, and possible is everything that is partially conditioned, that has not yet been fully or conclusively determined."

<sup>37</sup>Hudson, Pg. 82.



manner of thinking that seeks to uncover the 'good' or beneficent elements within this elusive reality of the 'not-yet'. Through the actualisation of these elements, Mankind is afforded the opportunity to achieve its potential and reach a state of totally-fulfilled Being. Only by devising a dialectical system such as this, asserted Bloch, that the alignment of the forces of Mankind's intentions with the real possibilities found within the objective world can be attained.

Given this, the 'truth' which the *Open System* seeks to uncover, like that of Nietzsche's system of Transvaluation, is the authentic nature of the eternal temporal process underlying all change within the world and humanity's interaction within it. The Open System provides the rough guidelines which directs Man through its voyage of discovery by influencing his interactive endeavours within the World. Though parts of this outline may prove untenable, such components cannot be considered as defeats, because the only possible default within such a system is the failure to embrace the potential of the future and attempt to remain within the security of an illusory static present.<sup>38</sup> It is imperative for Mankind to embark upon such a voyage in order to fulfil the totality of the potential which inhabits the temporal geography of the future while hidden within the immediate surroundings of the present. The totality of this system serves as a paradigm of the latent possibility of reality and promotes a dialectical conversation of critique with the inadequacy of the present.

Bloch's system of thought runs concurrent to Hegel's conception of the world process in which the subject provides the partial substance in the form of a plan of action that informs the processional unfolding of the historical events within the objective world.<sup>39</sup> However, Bloch's conception differs from that of Hegel's with his injection of the concept of the 'darkness of the moment',<sup>40</sup> which refers to the manifestation of the full existence of the Being of the world within each passing temporal instance. The realisable potential of such a moment can be discovered by man only through the proper alignment of his fluid subjective experience with the possible finality of the objective world. With this insertion of the possible 'full existence of the moment', a dialectical subject/object process of historical temporal movement is established. A process, as Wayne Hudson describes it; "where the subject journeys in search of an adequate object, with the moment providing the conscience of the plan, stirring the

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<sup>38</sup>Bloch, Pg. 197.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., Pg. 247-249.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., Pg. 291-295.

subject to fresh dissatisfaction, and reminding him of the intensity which is the unrelated goal."<sup>41</sup>

As a result, this system contains several assertions with important underlying ontological implications. In regards to the first, Bloch is expressly addressing the unsolved nature of the world-at-hand. In ontological terms, he is asserting that the problem of the objective world is a problem involving the fundamental notion of Being as well as the nature of consciousness, and that these problems must be addressed in a tandem manner and not in isolation. *S is not yet P*; meaning, there can be no subject which already contains its satisfactory predicate. This equation indicates that the fluid subjective nature of Man can view the objective world as a process in which he plays a role in the facilitation of its manifest potential. For the world progresses only to the extent that humanity progresses.<sup>42</sup> Hence, the ultimate reality of the world is a dialectical interaction between the formative processes of it and Man, with each reaching the potential being of the moment in direct relation to the other.

The second ontological implication contained within Bloch's system, involves the claim that the world at present is laden with infinite potential realities which are 'not-yet'. Thus, each instance of an existing reality is filled with a multitude of potential aspects of an impending 'not-yet' reality. Therefore, Bloch envisions the parameters of the present where; "The form consists in a Now constituting itself through an impression, and a tail of retentions affiliating itself to this and a horizon of protentions."<sup>43</sup> By this, it becomes apparent that Bloch's ontology of the 'not-yet' portrays the world as an infinite series of objective real possibilities perched on the edge of the future horizon, that are closely related to, but not completely actualised within the reality-at-hand. These objective possibilities have not been fulfilled to the fullest extent possible at any instance in time and may actually never be fully realisable. Nevertheless, this does not lessen their effect because they can still influence the actions of Man and his striving to manifest them can have a profound influence on the fundamental parameters of the objective reality.

Finally, unlike Nietzsche, Bloch envisions an imminent full or absolute content of the world's Being, which is at present, 'not yet', but entrenched within the continual process directed towards the eventual total manifestation of this Being. Hence, *Total Being*, or Being that has been completely fulfilled within the reality of the present objective world, is

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<sup>41</sup>Hudson, Pg. 87.

<sup>42</sup>Ernst Bloch, "Incipit Vita Nova" in *Man On His Own: Essays in the Philosophy of Religion*. trans. E. B. Ashton. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970.) Pg. 90.

<sup>43</sup>Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, Pg. 292-293.

foreshadowed continually within the context of its process, not as an actual *state*, but as the possible state on the verge of the next horizon. However, Bloch insists that this 'totally-fulfilled' Being will eventually be manifested within the present. When such an event occurs, the distance between the subject and the object will be eliminated and these two dialectic components will merge completely as one within the context of the "here and now". Within this context, utopia will no longer be an 'over there' in regards to its existence as a seemingly different or 'alien' world, it will become the fundamental existent or 'presence' of reality. It is at this temporal juncture, that the historical and world process will reach its absolute state as manifested in a 'genuine present'.<sup>44</sup>

### *III. The Fundamental Components of the "Open System"*

There are several ideas within the work of Bloch which are returned to repeatedly and appear as essential concepts in his speculative system. Theories such as *the Anticipatory Consciousness*, *Front*, *Novum*, and *Concrete Utopia*, serve as the foundations upon which Bloch's system of thought is founded. Each idea serves as a singular theoretical facet attempting to dislodge and overcome the stagnant interpretation of certain forms permanently fixed within the reality of the present. By overcoming such forms or institutions of interpretation, humanity can escape the burden of its past and rediscover the creative elements found within its nature by constructing images illustrating such potential and projecting them towards the future horizon. Such actions aid in the process of Becoming inherent to the existence of both Man and the World. With the uncovering of the primary characteristics of each of these components, a better picture of this conception of the world process and Man's role within it can be brought to light.

In regards to the first and possibly the most important of these concepts, *the anticipatory consciousness*, Bloch describes it simply as being; "...solely the pre consciousness of what is to come, the psychological birthplace of the New."<sup>45</sup> It is with this notion that Bloch outlines the principle utopian characteristic contained within the individual psyche that serves as the primary foundation for the communal psyche of humanity. It is the essential characteristic within the inner nature of Mankind aimed towards the fulfilment of its fundamental Being through a 'projecting out' of its essential subjective nature in the form of a paradigm of

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., Pg. 316-317.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., Pg. 116.

intention. This intellectual construct directs its activities towards the uncovering of latent possibilities contained within the world. However, such intentions are not focused on just any future, but one which contains the qualities of a 'good' future.

Bloch's definition of this faculty stems from a critique of Freud's theories involving the human unconscious, where it is portrayed as a psychological receptacle for all the repressed fears and neurosis contained within the psyche. To Bloch, it is this area of the human mind that must be reconsidered and redefined to include a description of its fundamental characteristics as comprising a fringe element which inhabits a prominent position on the transitory threshold between the conscious and unconscious. It is not just a residual space located within the deep crevices of the mind, nor a space where certain untenable impressions and memories are shut away from everyday consciousness. It is a faculty with an innate creative potential, a kind of *pre* conscious with a capacity imperative for existence: the indication of new horizons. Seen in this light, it is inherently creative and serves as the origin of the utopian impulse.<sup>46</sup>

This consciousness operates *universally* within the world as well as *particularly* within the human psyche and becomes manifest in the form of desires, wishes, and dreams. Consequently, the anticipatory consciousness finds its basis in the mental wandering and creative endeavours of the human imagination which are continually informed by the surrounding objective reality (see chapter 7). This reciprocal process then, is linked to the notion of anticipation, thereby enabling Mankind to envisage possibilities before they are actualised within the world-at-hand. Thus, it is a form of consciousness lying at the root of the utopian impulse and inhabits the space within the mental faculties just prior to the endeavours undertaken towards the actualisation of its intrinsic desires. It is the relationship between intention and activity mediated by the 'anticipatory consciousness' which produces a distinct utopian dimension to the human imagination allowing it to serve as a touchstone between the subjective inner nature of the psyche and the outer reality of its surrounding environment. This notion then, is the fundamental component of Bloch's attempt to blur the distinctions contained within the conventional dualism as expressed in Cartesian thought.<sup>47</sup> Through this device, Bloch sought to emphasise the connection and similarities between the subjectivity of the individual conscious and the objective reality of the world, not their divisions.

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., Pg. 118-119.

<sup>47</sup>Hudson, Pg. 95.

A second component important to Bloch's theoretical endeavour is termed as *Front*, and is described as the essential point of convergence within the dialectically material subjective/objective process of the world's historical unfolding. Within this context, Man and the World's process stand on equal terms allowing a 'philosophy of optimism' or 'materially comprehended hope' to emerge as an influential force on the foremost edge of the historical process between the still untapped potential of its past and the upcoming revelations regarding alternative futures as depicted by the anticipatory consciousness.<sup>48</sup> It is the partially illusive ideal which inhabits the horizon just ahead of the present state of Man and is connected to the human capacity for inspired action. Though unashamedly utopian and ethereal in its intrinsic nature, such an ideal, nevertheless, serves as an invitation for Man to take the necessary step in overcoming his state of incompleteness towards the complete manifestation of an essential state of Being, both in regards to his own nature and that of the world.

This concept is a major component in Bloch's intention of dissolving the implicit dualism between the 'ideal' of the subjective conscious and the 'material' world. Its underlying concept contains a simultaneity of meaning pertaining to the conception of *Front* as exterior to human nature, as well as describing the internalised yearning or striving that impels Mankind to attempt to move the subjective conscious out beyond the context of the human psyche. This can be done in one of two ways: either by Man taking action through a projection of the present state of his nature into the parameters of this transcendental ideal or by the assimilation of this ideal into his essential nature.<sup>49</sup>

Intricately related to the notion of *Front* is another concept referring specifically to the aspects of the 'new' which appear within the commonplace reality of the world. As was the case with the preceding notion, connotations change depending on the context surrounding its description. In the internal subjective sense, the *Novum* can infer the rapturous realisation of the characteristics of one's authentic mode of Being. It is a knowledge, which inhabits the temporal space just ahead of this event, but partially hidden within the intrinsic dimensions of the self. Consequently, it is a form of beginning, but one which is, and stays, intrinsically connected to the past. The *Novum* is the element that is 'fresh' or the embodiment of this form of beginning, but does not relate to the emergence of a completely new event having no connection to past events. It is a beginning that takes the form of a discovery of an attribute previously hidden because of its intrinsic interment within the objective world. This discovery

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<sup>48</sup>Bloch, Pg. 200.

<sup>49</sup>David Gross, "Ernst Bloch: The Dialectics of Hope" in *The Unknown Dimension: European Marxism Since Lenin*. ed. D. Howard & K. E. Klare. (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1981) Pg. 119.



of the 'new' within the 'old' is described by Bloch as; ".....there can be no creation of anything new, but only an uncovering of what is buried, a removal of encrustations from primordial realities. Therefore, the New is new only for the man who comes to know it, but never substantially new in itself."<sup>50</sup>

Thus, in a sense, this concept of beginning is the connection between the historical and personal meanings of *Novum*. Within the historical context, the smooth temporal sequence of history is interrupted by something wholly original to its surroundings, an event which shatters the ordered progression of time and its constituent temporal ordering of events. It is seemingly something from 'outside', but actually emerges directly from the fundamental parameters of this context. Such a rupture can arrive from one of two possible directions, the past or the future.<sup>51</sup> If the direction of its arrival is from the future, the *Novum* will reveal itself as a indication of untainted potentiality located within the compromised surroundings of the present. If it arrives from the past, it appears as a significant event symbolising the materialisation of certain ideals borrowed from previously manifest historical epochs (see chapter 6), that were conceived theoretically, but never materially actualised. Thus, the *Novum*, exists within the dormant expectation of history, at times discarded or forgotten, but intrinsic to the temporal environs of the present.<sup>52</sup>

The final underlying component of Bloch's system of thought rests on the notion of *concrete utopia*, which represents the principle guiding his attempt at an infusion of spiritualism into Marxism. This is facilitated through a theoretical connection between the material world of the present and the idea of a future state of fulfilled Being. It is the impending circumstance which becomes manifest where the subjective conscious has overcome its intrinsic disenfranchisement with its surroundings.<sup>53</sup> In this future, Man has moved past living the mere *appearance* of humanity, and reaches a state where the essential nature of its Being has encountered an imminent state of self-knowledge. It is towards this state that the process of the historical reality is incessantly progressing. However, Man cannot effectuate his full potential if his adopted indifference to the objective world is maintained. Thus, for this state to be effectuated, he must realise that the composition of his essential humanity finds its foundations within the interaction of the individual self and the objective world as manifest

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<sup>50</sup>Ernst Bloch, ("Incipit Vita Nova") Pg. 82.

<sup>51</sup>Gross, Pg. 120.

<sup>52</sup>Bloch, (*The Principle of Hope*) Pg. 200-201.

<sup>53</sup>Hudson, Pg. 102.

forms of Nature and society. It is this revelation that heralds the manifestation of *concrete utopia*.<sup>54</sup>

Thus, as Man strives to realise the essence of his inner self, he must transfigure the objective world and the foundations of society contained within it, to discover the essential 'home' for humanity. This 'home' rests within the circumstance where its full potential has been attained and mankind can be at one with itself. The utopian dreams of the past, transfigured the world to suit the needs of men inhabiting the intermediary temporal spaces surrounding their texts. With the materialisation of this type of utopia, such anticipation will be aligned with the concrete correlates comprising reality, therefore making it a truly fit place for the life of the self-actualised Man of the future. Given this, the concept of *concrete utopia* is the description of the imminent state where Mankind has attained its essence not only in correlation to its 'inner' nature, but has also transfigured the objective world to such an extent that it can abundantly provide for the needs of this previously undiscovered spirit of self-actualised Being.

And finally, the underlying connective element of these individual ideas constituting the *Open System* is contained within man's inherent ability to *hope*. However, within the context of this system, this characteristic is more than a psychological concept, for it is a fundamental force which plays an active role in the determination of the essential characteristics of the world. This attribute of *Hope*, is the universal factor within the world that remains in a perpetual state of discontentment throughout the entirety of the temporal process of its transfiguration. It arises within the perpetual discrepancy between the goals projected by the subjective self and the inadequate state of present reality. Moreover, it is this notion of hope which contains the innate ability to interact with this reality in order to mediate or correct certain deficient tendencies within it regarding the relationship of the subjective consciousness of Man and the nature of the world.<sup>55</sup>

Thus, it is the *principle of hope* as envisioned within the context of the *Open System* that provides the point of departure for the critique of the moral, political, and metaphysical parameters of the present. The function of hope as the manifest utopian impulse simultaneously fulfils the need for criticism of the inadequacies of the present as well as projecting the ideals brought forth depicting future possibilities of change as anticipated by the faculty of the imagination. Corresponding to this, is the fact that the productive capacity of

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<sup>54</sup>Bloch, Pg. 197.

<sup>55</sup>Hudson, Pg. 107.

hope finds its intrinsic ground in the latent possibilities contained within the temporal horizons of past and present. Hence, it cannot be conceived as the wishful longing underlying a fantasy, but a *presentiment* directed towards discovering the real possibilities contained within the World as the *not-yet-being*. In this way, a determinate utopian imagination is developed which serves to correlate the subjectivity of the 'inner' will and the objectivity of the 'outer' world. It is this interaction which serves as a connective apex between these intrinsic components comprising the essential parameters of existence. It is also at this juncture where the determinate subjective imagination of the utopian impulse manifested as the characteristic of hope finds the fundamental interactive ground with the notion of power.

### ***The Connections of Power and Utopia Within The Fundamental Ground of Being***

Within the preceding exploration of the key theories of Nietzsche and Bloch, several similarities of intention and approach began to emerge suggesting connections between their respective systems of thought. Firstly, There is an attempt by both thinkers to fuse the traditionally separate philosophical categories of politics, metaphysics, and aesthetics. Secondly, both assert that the importance of the existential issues concerning the essential Being of humanity and the objective world reality cannot be disassociated from the primary issues surrounding many of the questions which appear within the realms of history, culture, and politics. And finally, there are cognate attempts to dismantle the theoretical wall separating the subjective inner nature of Man and the objective world reality that is prevalent in many conventional metaphysical conceptions. The foundations for such claims rest on each philosopher's examination of the innate creativity of Man's inner nature within the context of its perpetual striving to transfigure its surroundings.

More specifically, several themes and objectives intrinsically akin to one another arise within their respective works. The emergence of nihilistic attitudes within certain underlying theories of modern thought, instigated each to propose systems of revaluation seeking to question the latent ideals or values serving as the foundation to the existing social and political systems that define many of the factors comprising the human condition. Further, the essential influence of Man's temporality plays a major role in their conception of this condition and its relationship to the course of events contained within the world. These connections become more apparent when certain aspects of the *Open System* and the *Eternal Recurrence* are compared.

Moreover, the major components of each system of thought as manifested within the concepts of the *Will To Power* and *The Anticipatory Consciousness* seemingly have a connection within the definition of the major drives contained within the human will. The claims made by Bloch regarding the necessity of mobilising latent utopian impulses as vehicles for the transfiguration of the external world seems intricately connected to the perpetual drive of the will as described by Nietzsche. And finally, the concept of the *Overman* contains the familiar ring of revelation found within a majority of descriptions generally considered utopian. Equally, Bloch's conception of the utopian imagination is portrayed in light of its being a type of *capacity* inextricably linking it to power.

The emergence of such aspects point increasingly to the intrinsic association of the attributes of power and utopia in relation to the existential questions raised in their respective analyses. These forces are inherently found in one form or another within all the philosophical components comprising each system of speculation. Thus, the demarcations between these forces contain a degree of flexibility allowing a substantial conceptual overlap which serves as the essential ground for the interrelation of the intrinsic drives underlying the dynamic forces of power and utopia. To fully uncover the extent of this interaction within the relationship of the inner nature of and his interaction with the surrounding reality of the world, an exploration of this overlap and the possible ramifications arising from it is imperative.

### *I. The Comparative Underlying Notions of The 'Open System' and The 'Eternal Recurrence'*

The primary connection between these systems occurs within the fundamental conception of a world process that is essentially indeterminate. Within each system, its constituent elements or entities are perpetually transforming with each passing instance of time. Hence, the components contained within the World are in a continual temporal 'flux' where the forces are seen as interrelated processes entrenched in a perpetual assemblage of transfiguration. In both accounts, it is a process where humanity *can* and *must* influence its progress through the creative acts undertaken in the expression of its inner nature. This subjective nature seeks to uncover its essential state of Being by interacting with its surrounding environment. Therefore, this reciprocal relationship of influence operates simultaneously on the level of Man as an entity contained within the existence of the world and as the totality of this intrinsic existence.

This brings the notion of temporality to the forefront as an intrinsically important element in the definition of existence. Each describes a paradigm of temporality where the whole

process manifests itself within a single instance of time contained within a perpetually occurring chain of instances trailing into infinity. The significance or meaning within life is the fact that such a process exists, has existed, and will continue to exist long after the present entities have ceased to do so. It is this temporal movement and Man's activity regarding it which gives existence its meaning, not intellectualised strategies involving metaphysical and moral ideals presented in the form of absolutes. Therefore, Man's actions within this world create his reality through the transformation of certain attributes located within the world, which in turn, influences human action through varying patterns of resistance.

Though the systems of thought expounded by both philosophers place importance on the intrinsic temporality of the world process, their concepts describing the actual mechanics of its movement vary somewhat. With the concept of *The Eternal Recurrence*, Nietzsche is portraying a cyclical process of temporal passage manifesting itself as an infinite series of present moments moving incessantly towards infinity. To a certain extent the present is seen as the complete state of existence because intertwined within it's parameters is the latent potential of the past and future. All the elements which have been part of the past, comprise the present, and will constitute the future are contained within this endless cycle of present moments. This temporal circle occurs continuously as the same elements and components are eternally arranged and rearranged to comprise the fundamental characteristics of the world. Given this, an entity which existed previously in a particular state will continue to exist throughout the whole of eternity, but in other compositions, relations of substance, or forms. So, in a sense, what is encountered now, has been encountered before, and will be encountered again. Therefore, according to the theory of the *Eternal Recurrence*, it is the existence of the process comprising the entirety of the system that serves as the ultimate justification that bestows meaning to the existence of its constituent components.

Where Bloch's notion of the inherent temporality of the world process differs greatly from Nietzsche's conception, is that he keeps within the Hegelian tradition of describing the intrinsic temporality of the world as being a progression towards the manifestation of an absolute existence<sup>56</sup>. Here, Bloch makes a recurrent mistake found in many utopian descriptions

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<sup>56</sup>See Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. trans. A. V. Miller. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) Pg. 492-493. Hegel describes subjective/objective relationship comprising this temporal progression as; "This Becoming presents a slow-moving gallery of Spirits, a gallery of images, each of which, endowed with all the riches of Spirit, moves thus slowly just because the Self has to penetrate and digest this entire wealth of substance....In the immediacy of this new existence the Spirit has to start afresh to bring itself to maturity as if, for it, all that preceded were lost and it had learned nothing from the experience of the earlier Spirits. But recollection, the *inwardizing*, of that experience, has preserved



claiming the possibility of an such ultimate existence. In other words, he portrays a kind of culmination to the historical process of the world in the form of an end fulfilment which allows humanity to exist in a state of peace and harmony with itself. Within this circumstance, Man has reached a state of totally fulfilled Being and can be at home with himself and the world.

Though this ultimate state of Being is not an *over there*, in the sense commonly depicted in utopian texts, it is nevertheless a conception of an absolute or perfect existence. As discussed earlier, this underlies the potential for deception inherent to the utopian endeavour because it portrays the possibility of a state where Mankind can transcend its intrinsic *lack*. Hence, there is a certain implicit notion of *destiny* found within Bloch's conception of the temporal process of the world. A utopian reading of the *Eternal Recurrence* can overcome this by defining the utopian impulse as a process of criticism directed perpetually towards the existing conditions of the present and not a 'theoretical map' leading to a 'promised land' of total fulfilment. Within the context of these theories, one can see that utopia is a process implicit to the greater temporal system of the world, and one which will exist continually for the duration of humanity's presence within it.

Another important agreement between these systems is that each addresses the relationship between the subjective 'inner' nature of the self and the objective reality of the World. Each theory seeks to overcome the categorical discontinuity within traditional philosophical discourse by emphasising a process of affirmation between the subjective desires of the will and the objective world. It is through this interaction that self-identity is created and reinforced in both the individual and the world. There is however, within each argument a difference in the emphasis placed on Man's role within this dialectical relationship. By Bloch's account, it is only through the influence brought about by the activities of Man which can unlock the true Being of the world, whereas within Nietzsche's system, Man is but one entity of an infinite number of entities comprising the systematic whole of the World's process.

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it and is the inner being, and in fact the higher form of substance. So although this Spirit starts afresh and apparently from its own resources to bring itself to maturity, it is none the less on a higher level that it starts. The realm of Spirits which is formed in this way in the outer world constitutes a succession in Time in which one Spirit relieved another of its charge and each took over the empire of the world from its predecessor. Their goal is the revelation of the depth of Spirit, and this is *the absolute Notion*." He goes on further to describe the manifestation of this *goal* of an absolute existence as; "The *goal*, Absolute Knowing, or Spirit that knows itself as Spirit, has for its path the recollection of the Spirits as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organisation of their realm. Their preservation, regarded from the side of their existence appearing in the form of contingency, is History; but regarded from the side of their [philosophically] comprehended organisation, it is the Science of Knowing in the sphere of appearance..."

Though an important component with an influential role, according to the theory of the *will to power*, if man ceased to exist, some other life form would strive to fill the void left by its absence. Consequently, the system of the world as the manifest *Eternal Recurrence*, reaches its fulfilled Being within each present 'now', but also strives to reach an increased state within the next. Its emphasis is on the manifest present instead of some distant future. The inner nature of Man must accept this given characteristic of the world and embrace its liberating consequences in order to discover the true nature of its essential Being within it. Such a distinction implies that Man's responsibility is solely to the fulfilment of *its* potential, as is the case with every other entity contained within this reality. Thus, Bloch's system seems to prejudice man's role within the eternal system of the world, whereas Nietzsche's accepts that man is but one type of entity in an eternity of entities, all striving to fulfil their intrinsic potential. The latter conception reinforces the notion that Man forges *his* reality through certain creative endeavours to transfigure it.

A final connection stems from the intrinsic notion of temporality implicit to each of their systems of thought and is embodied by their assertions that the entirety of the world's process is contained within the emergence of each passing instance of time. Each moment then, contains the beginning and end result of the entire process. Therefore, its beginnings are not entirely 'new', but are directly connected to past and future horizons. This similarity reveals the intrinsic connection of the temporal phases of the past, present, and future. Hence, in Bloch's words; "....every moment, when it has not emerged, is in the year zero of the beginning of the world.....every moment therefore likewise potentially contains the date of the completion of the world and the data of its content."<sup>57</sup>

By both accounts, these are not considered three distinctly singular temporal phases as is commonly perceived, but seamless horizons comprising a singular temporal process. The potential of the future has its foundations laid within a present that is intricately connected to the past. Such a cycle is repeated continuously through the succession of historical events unfolding in a perpetual process of Becoming, with everything that exists being entrenched in this eternal temporal system. Such events are not determined and are essentially 'open' to any order of occurrence. It is here that a contradiction in Bloch's argument arises through the assertion that an emergence of an impending event of totally fulfilled Being, which seems to be a determinate state of closure, becomes most acute.

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<sup>57</sup>Bloch, Pg. 308.

Coupled within the extremely liberating qualities inherent to this notion of a process of perpetual beginnings emerges the implicit risk involved with any creative act void of a pre-determined outcome. Bloch labels such uncertainty the *hazard*<sup>58</sup> involved within the emergence of the moment. This idea indicates that not only is the illusive impressions of the world's potentially-fulfilled Being contained within each moment, but the potential attributes heralding its final destruction exists within this instance as well. So, inherent to each creative action is an implicit risk of its becoming destructive, and leading to the complete annihilation of the process of existence. Nietzsche recognised this potential as well when he speaks of the need for the experimentation on the parameters of human existence to the point that it may lead to its destruction. Thus, within each system of thought there is the overriding assertion that the process of creative freedom involves an inherent danger, but it is necessary if the full potential of existence is to be reached and utilised.

## II. *The Anticipatory Consciousness and The Will to Power*

A second implicit connection between these theoretical systems lies within the fundamental link between the concepts of the *will to power* and *the anticipatory consciousness*. The intrinsic ground for this appears in Nietzsche's claim that the notion of *willing* pertaining to the concept of the *will to power* refers to a process involving an existent enmeshed in a perpetual state of striving towards something that is not necessarily a fixed object. As explored earlier in the discussion on the essential nature of power, Nietzsche contests Schopenhauer's description<sup>59</sup> of the will because he claims that the act of willing can never be considered a pure state in itself, but that there must always be a willing towards *something*. Thus, the relationship between the *will* and its fixed subject is an intrinsically dynamic and active one. The essential parameters of this fluent relationship is described by Nietzsche in a statement contained within the text, *The Will To Power*:

"There is no such thing as 'willing', but only the willing of something: the *aim* must not be severed from the state-as the epistemologists sever it. "Willing", as they understand it, is no more possible than "thinking": it is pure invention. It is essential to willing that something should be *commanded* (but that does not mean that the will is carried into effect). The general state of *tension*, by virtue of which a force seeks to discharge itself, is not "willing".<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Hudson, Pg. 96.

<sup>59</sup>Heidegger, (*The Will To Power as Art*) Pg. 41.

<sup>60</sup>Nietzsche, *The Will To Power*, (aph. 668) Pg. 353.

This description indicates that the notion of *willing* intrinsically involves an object or purpose, for the act of removing this element from the equation negates the possibility of an act of will altogether.<sup>61</sup> A question now surfaces as to how such an object comes into being as the *aim* or *purpose* endemic to this notion of the will? The answer seems to rest within Bloch's conception of the fundamental underlying force of the utopian impulse, the *anticipatory consciousness*. In his description of this faculty, Bloch contends that the not-yet-conscious is the consciousness directed towards the 'new' and emerging elements of the immediate future, those forward-dawning attributes which have not been completely manifested within the realm of the present. Thus, this 'consciousness', is actually a *pre consciousness*, that inhabits the essential ground for the Being of Mankind as the element driving its perpetual Becoming.

Such a consciousness draws on elements contained within the potential of the objective world in an effort to define the object towards which the will seeks to overcome. In turn, it is the striving towards this object that defines its essential parameters as envisioned within the concept of the 'will to power'. The essential nature of such objectives is transitive, evoking an eternal cycle consisting of the projection of the objective and the subsequent striving to attain or surpass it. This cycle constitutes the essential act of self-overcoming which serves as the fundamental component of the world as the will to power. In other words, it is the *anticipatory consciousness* which casts the object in the form of an obstacle of latent potential that the will to power seeks to overcome in its project to command.

So, in essence, *the anticipatory consciousness* informs the aim or purpose to which the act of will is directed. Such a cycle is perpetual, affecting all living beings to a varying extent, thereby within the world comprising their essential state of Being as the 'innocence of becoming.' Through this process of anticipation the not-yet-conscious indicates the object for the expenditure of strength manifest within the will to power. This relationship then, is the essential ground for the fundamental being of Man as a temporal entity. Consequently, it is within this process that individual entities seek to surpass or move beyond their present state by an *overcoming* of the obstacles laid before them, that is the fundamental common ground where the forces of power and utopia merge and interact.

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., (*aph.* 675) Pg. 356. Nietzsche describes this relationship between the activity of "willing" and its object as; "All 'purposes,' 'aims,' 'meaning' are only modes of expression and metamorphoses of one will that is inherent in all events: the will to power. To have purposes, aims intentions, *willing* in general, is the same thing as willing to be stronger, willing to grow-and, in addition, willing the means to do this."

### III. Nietzsche's Utopian Vision: The Overman, and The Characteristic of Power Within The 'Open System'

Typically, the work of Nietzsche has not been associated with the more conventionally accepted forms of utopian thought, but certain characteristics arise that seemingly have a connection to the ideas generally found within this discipline of thought. Though such utopian connotations are not as overt as those located within the work of Bloch, there are several qualities akin to the characteristics generally associated with the utopian genre. One such similarity is found in the description of the *Overman* (*Übermensch*) and the system defining its social context. Similarly, Bloch's conception of the human imagination within the *Open System* portrays this faculty as containing a utopian dimension having the capacity to influence the objective world in the endeavour to bring certain desires and intentions to fruition. In the context of Bloch's argument the human imagination is portrayed as a form of *power* owing to its implicit connection with the potential modification of the surrounding environment. It is similarities and connections such as these that reinforce the assertion that at an essential level the forces of power and utopia are inherently connected.

With the notion of the *Overman*, Nietzsche projects an ideal type for humanity which surpasses the present state through its fundamental 'openness' towards the authentic nature of the world. It accepts and embraces the true nature of the process of reality as embodied in the world's essential Becoming. According to this description, it is only this realisation that enables Man to embark on a journey of discovery regarding his true essence. Therefore, with the formulation of the concept of the Overman, the 'no place' intrinsic to the concept of utopia has been located within the notion of the individual. By this depiction, the true nature of Man's quest for the discovery of its essential Being is not the creation of a rational and wholly determined ideal social structure, but the formulation of a type of ideal individual. Such an individual is not a contrived creation imagined within the day dreams of the dispossessed, but can be found within the world as it stands and has always stood.<sup>62</sup> There is an innate utopian spirit of self-realisation within the supra-individualised identity of the Overman, that longs

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<sup>62</sup>Nietzsche, (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*) Pg. 144. Nietzsche describes a new spirituality or *will* endemic to this notion of an overhumanity, which intrinsically contains a spirit of acceptance serving as the foundation for the affirmation of life. "A new pride my ego taught me, and this I teach men: no longer to bury one's head in the sand of heavenly, but to bear it freely, an earthly head, which creates a meaning for the earth.

A new will I teach men: to *will* this way which man has walked blindly, and to affirm it, and no longer to sneak away from it like the sick and decaying." *Op. Cit.* Ansell-Pearson, Pg. 107.



solely for the spiritual liberation elusive to the 'last' man who is entrenched in his torpid materiality. The potential of this spiritual redemption does not rest in another temporal horizon or heavenly place, but is implicit to the realm of the present, for it is within this context that Man can discover and embrace his authentic nature. By doing so, the resentment felt towards this reality is overcome and a new type of human can emerge.

Such an individual, accepts the true nature of existence with all of its experiences ranging from the pleasure of feelings such as love and happiness to the equally prevalent acts of avarice, cruelty, violence, and pain. It is one who recognises the beauty as well as the tragedy of human existence, allowing for the fact that what is determined as evil by the decaying doctrines of the last humans is as important as those it deems 'good.' Such demarcations project a false dualism dividing the fundamental unity of the world. The Overman openly acknowledges the necessity of embracing the world as it is, in its inherent state of Becoming, where *all* events and manifestations play a role in the perpetual interaction of forces comprising its process.

It is from this acceptance of the true nature of human existence, that serves as the point of departure for the construction of a society which is completely congruent with the true nature of reality. To Nietzsche, the quest for modern mankind should not be to instigate a social revolution, but one that is essentially cultural and artistic. The central aim of politics should be seen entirely as a means to an singular end: the production of a majestic culture founded by and upon the noble actions of this new breed of humanity.<sup>63</sup> Consequently, his ideal society is not based on attempts to provide redemption from human suffering based on a random conception of social justice, but finds its foundations on an existence which endeavours to undertake noble acts of creativity.

In his text, *The Rebel*, the existentialist writer Albert Camus criticises this conception on two distinct counts. One, concerns the concept of the *Overman*, which Camus asserts is a representation containing a tendency located within the majority of radical utopian texts; 'the secularisation of the ideal'. The other, pertains to the inadvertent justification his philosophy can provide for the most ignoble of actions.<sup>64</sup> In regards to the first criticism, Camus claims Nietzsche's philosophy involves similar religious connotations to the ones he sets out to undermine and is akin to those found in many radical utopian methodologies. This is due largely to its demands for a kind of acceptance similar to the demands of blind faith made by many messianic figures. However, the faith it requires does not manifest itself towards an

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<sup>63</sup>Ansell-Pearson, Pg. 7.

<sup>64</sup>Camus, *The Rebel*, Pg. 57-71. *Op. Cit*; Ansell-Pearson, Pg. 58-59.

obedience to a Deity, but in the form of a faith in positive attributes of nihilism. With this, the second criticism comes into focus concerning Nietzsche's endeavour in asking the question; Can one exist without some form of objective moral standard to guide ones' actions? Nietzsche's answer was in the affirmative, by expounding the virtues of the nihilistic path with its underlying premise that existence knows no limits. The openness of this supposition can allow individuals ignoring the overriding purpose of his thought, to commit morally reprehensible acts of cruelty or violence in the name of his philosophy involving the affirmation of life.

It is this same spirit of nihilism which underlines the attribute of power within Bloch's utopian perspective. The notion which informs Bloch's utopianism is illustrated in Nietzsche's description of the revelation which brings forth the nihilist attitude intrinsic to modern thought. It is in the underlying idea that the actual manifestation of a goal as well as the process of its visualisation, that constitutes meaning within the 'open system' that relates to the notion of power as *capacity*. For it is Mankind's transfiguration of the objective world reality, through the activity instigated by its striving to express its inmost subjective Being, that gives its existence meaning while simultaneously allowing the world to fulfil its innate potential. Thus, in the expression of its innate desires, Mankind endeavours to *dominate* certain parameters contained within its surrounding context and in doing so, exercises its intrinsic capacity. This is achieved through the guidance of the *anticipatory consciousness* grounded within the faculty of the human imagination as it reveals the latent potential contained within the surrounding environment.

Consequently, within the context of Bloch's thought, the human imagination is depicted as a form of power. It is not a passive faculty merely compensating for the intrinsic lack contained within human existence, but is utilised to transform Man's surroundings in correlation to his innermost state of Being. In undertaking such activity, Man assumes a central role in the manifestation of the World's impending absolute Being. He becomes the central cultivator of the immanent 'not yet' through his endeavour to create an environment corresponding his inner subjective nature. According to Bloch's conception, the full existence of the world may have the potential to emerge within each instance of time, but the appearance and utilisation of this potential can only be realised through the interaction with the creative intuition of humanity. Hence, the exercise of Man's faculties, i.e., his *capacity* or *power*, regarding his subjective fulfilment is intrinsically linked with the possible final outcome of the sequence of events contained within the continual expression of the objective world content.

## ***The Fundamental Metaphysical Ground For The Connection of Power and Utopia***

In the exploration of the concepts underlying these two systems of thought, several connections have been made between their central concepts that reveal the intrinsic relationship between the forces of power and utopia within the fundamental ground of Man's Being. The characteristics of the relationship of these forces at this level directly influences the perceptions upon which the social and political structures of Man's societies are founded. It becomes apparent within the context of these theories that the relationship between these forces is situated upon the primordial ground of man's essential Being and bestows an ontological significance presupposing any ideology or theory.

Each philosopher's assertion claiming the intrinsic connection between existential, political, and cultural, issues seems to reinforce the initial premise of this study that the interaction of these forces underlying power and utopia infiltrate and influence every facet of the human condition. The surrounding issues raised within the connections explored above are constituent components of the ontological link between the subjectivity of man and the objective world. Such an interaction also illustrates the importance that the attributes of temporality and change play within the perpetual "flux" constituting the fundamental existence of the world. For Man to take an active role in this process there needs to be a revision of the conventionally accepted categorical systems of thought to include some of the issues raised by the arguments of Nietzsche and Bloch.

According to this assertion then, though the intentions behind power and utopia may appear on the surface as opposing forces, they are actually intrinsically connected within the fundamental ground of Man's being as manifest Becoming. It is the essential characteristics of this primordial ground that leads both philosophers to formulate existential links within the categories of thought involving metaphysics, politics, religion, and aesthetics. By this fusion, a conception of the political activities of Man can be formulated which reveals the impetus of social and political events which lies deeper than more conventional political conceptions based on a generic theory of social justice. Their theories rely on an interpretation of the authentic nature of the interaction between the subjective self and the objective world. In other words, they search for the dynamic forces that inform the basis of these constructs, within the parameters of Man's fundamental ontology.

With the uncovering of this link, the connection of these attributes establishes the fact that our ideals of social justice are created, at least partially to justify the results from the interaction of such implicit societal forces. Consequently, it underlines the fact that it is

essential to the survival of both the individual and its society that such conceptions are continually recreated corresponding to the nature of events arising within the temporal datum of the world. In any such endeavour the risk may be great, but the only alternative is to rely on fictitious absolutes designed to compensate, rather than inform. Thus, Man, the open subject, must in his essential Being, seek to continually transform himself, his social structures, and the world creatively.

With the discovery of these connections, a final trait of the relationship of power and utopia, begins to surface. This characteristic refers to the intrinsic unity of these two forces. In avoiding the perception that this connection is a kind of dualism resembling the type that Nietzsche and Bloch sought to overcome, it is imperative to assert that on a fundamental level these forces are indistinguishable for they stem from the same impetus located within the World. Therefore, it is an interaction which can be described in light of the relationship of the universal forces of creation and destruction. These affects can never be conceived of separately, for when a particular state is destroyed, another is created. The relationship of power and utopia is a constituent part of the same unity of process involved in the definition of the fundamental existent of both Man and the World. Such forces as so intricately connected that the differences, at this level are indistinguishable, because they are as one.

So, simply stated, what are the essential parameters of the metaphysical relationship of power and utopia? The answer lies in the legacy to which Nietzsche and Bloch's systems of thought inherit from the philosophy of Heraclitus. The tension between the dynamic forces of power and utopia is a component process within the world's temporal mechanism where each element emerges out of a perpetual conflict and strife. It is a process where entities are involved in an eternal cycle of continuous change.<sup>65</sup> By this, there is nothing permanent within the world that is fixed or static. Nothing remains inert, as it appears in the circumstances of the present, for it soon passes into its opposite. Hence, everything emerges from everything, with all elements intrinsically related to all other elements. This cyclical process of creation and destruction contained within the world never ceases, but is the manifest process of Becoming inherent to the existence of the World and Man's position within it. So, there is a perpetual balance produced as all elements merge into their opposites.<sup>66</sup> This fluid

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<sup>65</sup>E. Zeller, *A History of Greek Philosophy: From The Earliest Period To The Time of Socrates*. trans. S. F. Alleyne. Vol. II. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1881) Pg. 11. See also; W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greek Philosophers: From Thales to Aristotle*. (London: Methuen & Co., 1956) Pg. 43-46.

<sup>66</sup>Zeller, Pg. 30-31. The author describes Heraclitus's notion of attributes stemming from opposites as; "It follows then from the flux of all things that everything, without exception, unites in itself opposite

*equilibrium* contains the appearance of harmony in Nature, in that it is a state that is not static, but continually shifting, born out of the strife of opposites. Given this, it is an equilibrium resembling the universal balance of Nature which is necessary within this interaction of the forces of power and utopia for a harmonious social condition to emerge allowing both the individual and society to reach their full potential.

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qualities. Each change is a transition from one condition to the opposition; if everything changes and only exists in this mutation things are but a middle-term between opposites; and whatever point we may seize in the flux of Becoming, we have only a point of transition and limit, in which antagonistic qualities and conditions encounter one another."



## **Chapter V:**

### ***The Interaction of Power and Utopia Within the Social and Political Realm***

The discussion within the last chapter focused on the interaction of power and utopia within the context of the definition of Man's fundamental ontological characteristics. It emerged from this exploration, that at this level these forces are intricately intertwined and provide the foundation for the interaction between Man's subjective nature and the objective world. In turn, it is these connections that influence the central convictions underlying the composition of the social, political, and cultural systems of humanity.

Though it was discovered that these forces are involved in the unified temporal structure of the World process, they emerge within the social sphere as separate and distinct dynamic forces interacting to influence its essential composition. Accordingly, the utopian imagination is manifested as a genre of critical thought, while power becomes enmeshed within the symbolic structures of the predominant existing ideology constructed to legitimise the actions of the dominant group or party.

Although this separation is traditionally portrayed as being polemical, in reality, each characteristic drive is an important constituent component of the fluid process of social transformation. Such drives create new facets of, or reinforce existing components of the communal psyche of a society. It is their influence that directs the integration of a multitude of individual desires contained within a specific socio/political circumstance towards the

composition of the social imagination.<sup>1</sup> This social *focus* mobilises these varying interests towards undertaking the praxis necessary for the manifestation of certain social and political objectives. As discussed above, this interaction contains the capacity to exact both constructive and destructive consequences on a society through the reinforcement or subversion of existing social and political structures.

Therefore, the focus of the discussion within this section will strive to expose certain central characteristics involved in the interaction of these forces and the potential events stemming from them. This analysis will be comprised of three phases. Within the first, the relationship of ideology and utopia will be explored to uncover the parameters of the theory/praxis relationship that transpires between the imagery organising social action and its consequences. The second phase of the enquiry will explore the specific effects that such forces can have upon the mechanisms of the political arena, while the third and final phase will concentrate on the possible positive and negative repercussions arising from the interrelation of these forces. It is this interaction that underlies events ranging from progressive social reforms to catastrophic episodes such as war, revolution, and social violence. To begin this investigation, the focus of this study will now turn towards uncovering the central characteristics of the relationship between ideology and utopia as well as their influence on the attribute of power within the social and political sphere of a society.

### ***Power, Utopia, and Ideology***

In undertaking this analytical endeavour, an imperative primary step involves the clarification of several traditionally ambiguous terms. Within preceding sections of this text several steps have been made towards the definition and clarification of the two primary concepts contained within this study, but as this examination moves into the social and political realm the relevant connections to the traditionally controversial concept of ideology must be addressed to determine the type of influence such traits have upon the composition of a specific social circumstance. Therefore, the concept of ideology must first be defined clearly in order to allow for the clarification of its connections to power and utopia. Only then, will it be possible to uncover the intrinsic connections between the 'social conception' and its influence on subsequent social actions.

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Ricoeur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*. ed. George H. Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986) Pg. 1.

## I. The Concept of Ideology

Since its appearance around the time of the French Revolution<sup>2</sup>, the concept of ideology has played a central role in the definition of the discourse of a great many political movements. However, when exploring the implications of the term, a persistent ambiguity is encountered, due largely to the various degrees of significance it infers. Much of this ambiguity stems from the term's dependence upon the specific characteristics of its context. Consequently, the definition of ideology can be indicative of two possible meanings, one carrying with it pejorative connotations, while the other refers to implications of a more universal nature.<sup>3</sup>

Marx's usage is the classic embodiment of the term utilised in the pejorative sense because within his critique of the theoretical underpinnings of capitalism, it is used in a derogatory manner. His argument claimed that ideology referred to the ruling social construct that purposely spawned a perpetual alienation as a mechanism of control. Following within the Hegelian tradition of basing the movement of history on a universal rationality,<sup>4</sup> Marx saw reality as a process of temporal fluctuation with only its *appearance* actually being transformed by the prejudices contained within Man's perception of it. Such interpretations are generally mistaken in their belief that Man's surrounding environment is comprised of stable and unchanging constituent elements.<sup>5</sup> His argument asserts that ideology is founded upon these mistaken perceptions and prejudiced by various interests. Consequently, it is taken to be a methodology of distortion which obscures the true nature of our praxis-oriented reality. Though claiming to produce an accurate depiction of the social sphere intrinsic to the human condition, in reality, ideology produces a type of reverse image that distorts and conceals its true parameters through a process of selective negation.

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<sup>2</sup>George Lichtheim, *The Concept of Ideology and Other Essays*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1967) Pg. 4-5. The original creator of the term was Antoine Destutt de Tracy who was connected with the then recently created Institute de France. He and the other 'ideologists' aligned with the Institute belonged within the tradition of Liberalism and regarded intellectual freedom of expression as the ultimate gain of the Revolution. According to Lichtheim's explanation, these early *ideologues* were considered 'ideological' because of their intrinsic concern with the nature of ideas, and their bestowing greater importance on aims founded upon *ideals* to mere material interests serving as the primary foundation of French society after the Revolution.

<sup>3</sup>Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*. trans. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd, 1940) Pg. 49. In this text, Mannheim's makes a similar distinction by claiming that the term ideology is connected with two meanings that are clearly distinguishable-one of a particular nature, the other of a universal. The former denotes the scepticism felt towards an opponent's ideals and symbolic system of values. It carries with it connotations implying some form of deception, either intentional or otherwise. The latter describes the totality of the systematic symbology structuring the composition of the overriding mentality of a specific group or epoch.

<sup>4</sup>Lichtheim, Pg. 13.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., Pg. 31.

So, ideology produces an inverse image in the form of an idealised paradigm of social distortion, which serves only to distance or alienate the individual from the true nature of its surroundings. Thus, there is a dichotomy between the actions or praxis undertaken by individuals within the social reality and their ideological conceptions of these events. According to Marx, individuals undertake certain actions dictated by this reality, and then formulate conceptualisations pertaining to their meaning and content. By this, the idea does not presuppose the act, because it is the action that informs the idea. Social action precedes ideology, which serves only as delusive mechanism seeking to control and legitimate certain behavioural patterns through the production of a 'false consciousness.' In the pejorative sense then, ideology doesn't influence action in a positive way, but its function is to produce deceptive images that distort the true nature of social reality.

Within this conception of ideology, there is an overriding assertion that its foundations rest intrinsically on the latent interests trying to dominate the surrounding social context through the determination of the possible social actions that an individual can undertake. It functions on a purely psychological level and directs its focus towards manipulating the motivations of various groups seeking to acquire an influence over a social circumstance. As a result of this association, when an adversary is claimed to be ideological, there is an implicit insinuation that certain interests, either internal or external, are causing the distorted imagery serving as the foundation for his mistaken perception of reality. Hence, ideology is not only describing the illusions contained within a political adversary's view of reality, but also the scepticism confronting it. This first meaning of the term carries connotations more particular in nature, for it is referring directly to the conscious or semi-conscious fabrications that obscure ones perceptions of the true conditions of the social reality.<sup>6</sup>

Coupled with this, is a second meaning more universal in nature. It indicates the systematic compilation of certain symbols and perceptions into a conceptual framework that simultaneously creates and interprets Man's communal reality. Such fundamental belief systems comprise the social and cultural patterns that organise and interpret the multitude of seemingly disparate perceptions contained within the existing social reality. They serve as theoretical paradigms which inform and reinforce human actions within this sphere. Contrary to the former conception, it is these intellectual constructs which presuppose and inform human actions within the social and political realm.

According to this more generalised conception, ideology is referring to the intellectual framework which serves as the theoretical foundation for the collective configuration of human ideas and actions that comprise the essential conditions of a given historical circumstance. It defines both the form and content of a specific system of thought and provides the intellectual

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<sup>6</sup>Mannheim, Pg. 49-51.

foundations for the categories of belief that rationalise and legitimate the very existence of the cultural configurations stemming from it. Therefore, it describes the unified perspective that emerges as the dominant force within a given epoch and is the totality of the intellectualised cultural mechanism that encompasses the beliefs, desires, and actions of the various individuals contained within its reality. In short, it refers to the wide-spread integration of the experience and desires contained within large scale groups of individuals.<sup>7</sup>

The duality of function stipulated by these arguments is not necessarily polemical and can actually be seen in a complementary light. These differences are actually intricately interconnected with both being needed to provide an accurate description of the social reality.<sup>8</sup> This situation stems from the fact that an individual belonging to a specific group or social circumstance interacts with only a limited portion of the totality of that structure. As a result, this individual can only be a limited manifestation of the wealth of experiences and interests that constitutes the systematic whole of a culture. Given this, the question of ideology is fundamental to the process of socialisation intrinsic to the human condition because its universal nature is never shown as a coherent totality within the present, but always as an outcome or result of a past epoch. The past is the apparatus of revelation concerning the more integrative meaning of the term, for the dominate ideological structure within the present is only partially unveiled through the outlook and actions of those individuals it influences.

It is here that the duality of its inherent nature becomes most pronounced, as do the reasons underlying this fundamental characteristic. Owing to its intrinsic involvement in the constitution of the structures of a particular social context, at times ideology appears as a defused referent providing a highly abstracted indication of the complexity of the underlying interaction of beliefs and symbols contained within a social circumstance. At other times however, it gives a clear indication of certain definite causes to the actions and beliefs of an individual. This appearance of an incessant circular movement of meaning produces the ambiguity that has made the concept of ideology so contentious. In one instance, it appears as a referent to the founding ideas behind a whole cultural system, while alternatively it affords a specific critique towards the personalised structure of belief an individual carries in relation to such a system. It is within this ambiguity that a certain clarity of purpose resides, for in both cases ideology provides the intellectualised factor of legitimization underlying human existence. The conceptual framework produced by ideology, justifies its existence through the mere fact that it constitutes the essence of meaning contained within the human condition. Hence, at a fundamental level, ideology is concerned with legitimising the existing hierarchical

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., Pg. 53. See also chapter 3, "The Positive Attributes of Power" for a discussion of Durkeim's view.

<sup>8</sup>Ricouer, Pg. 12.



structure, or in other words, the *status quo*. This makes it a necessary mechanism for the machinations of the dominant power inhabiting the social structures of Man.

## II. Ideology, Authority, and Utopia

As discovered in the preceding section, the concept of ideology references the system of beliefs that underlies the social constructs of Man. Subsequently, this description is inadvertently referring to certain implicit connections between such a system and certain attributes of power and utopia. Within the social realm, the emergence of a distinct group or individual differentiated from the populace by an elite rank, signifies a claim regarding the right to govern. Implicit to this claim, is the demand to utilise force in the implementation of the measures needed to materialise its conceptions for the organisation of that society. However, no group or leader can rule solely by forceful or violent means, so coupled with this claim to a legitimate utilisation of force is a related demand that its subjects must bestow their consent. In short, it requires a belief in its legitimate claim to dominate.<sup>9</sup> It is this second factor that is of primary importance to maintaining a position of power within the social realm and it is impossible for a governing body to rely solely on the use of violent or coercive force in the implementation of its intentions indefinitely. Because of this, it must therefore cultivate a certain belief in its legitimacy as a governing body.<sup>10</sup>

Ideology provides a useful method of creating such a belief through the creation of a system of values and ideals that propagates an image legitimising the actions of a dominant regime. It achieves this by denoting the codes that dictate and define the perceptions of the individuals within its domain. This value system allows the individual to assimilate the perceptions, values, and ideals necessary for its inclusion within such an order. Ideology provides the communal perspective of interpretation created by an existing power structure that legitimises, consolidates and reinforces its conceptual configurations. This communal perspective is the basis for the codes, laws, and social practices installed by the ruling contingent of a society seeking to integrate a diverse variety of individual interests and desires into a unified

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<sup>9</sup>Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*. Vol. I. ed. Guenther Roth & Claus Wittich. (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968) Pg. 213.

<sup>10</sup>Weber, Pg. 215. Weber specifies three types of authority (*Herrschaft*), each resting on various claims of legitimacy. The first, *legal authority*, is the right to govern on rational grounds. This claim finds its foundations within the structure of legality embodied in the laws and rules which bestow upon an individual or group the right to govern. The second, *traditional authority*, is founded upon an established belief passed from generation to generation through rituals or traditions and utilises the cloak of their legitimacy for its command. The third and final type, is *charismatic authority*. This type refers to the form of domination resting upon the unique persona of an individual or the social order created by this person. It is also noted by Paul Ricouer that the German term *Herrschaft*, has been translated into English simultaneously as *authority* and *domination*, thus giving one a certain insight into the true connotations of the term. See Ricouer, Pg. 13.

perspective. This provides the opportunity for the party in power to orchestrate social action and reinforce its control.

There is, however, generally a discrepancy involved between a governing structure's claim to legitimate domination and the belief or consent given by the masses. There is an implicit unease or tension involved in this relationship between the demands of the dominate group in power and the willingness of those it controls to confer their consent. This situation arises within all structures of power regardless of their specific ideological content, but the amount of friction encountered depends on the effectiveness of these measures. As an ideology seeks to overcome this perpetual tension, it may move from being a purely integrative device to one purposely distorting reality according to the content of the policies and actions it seeks to justify. If these actions are exceptionally unpopular or repressive, the ideological machine of a government may seek to distort the facts surrounding certain events in an effort to conceal or obscure them. It is at this point that the potential for deception emerges, for the ideology is no longer utilised to integrate varying perspectives, but attempts to conceal the actions of a power structure that is no longer legitimate in the eyes of its subjects. Thus, by seeking to overcome this friction, the deceptive capabilities of ideology justifies the existing distributions of power.<sup>11</sup> Here, the reason for power's affinity towards the ideological surfaces, for it can serve as an apparatus for maintaining the existing distribution of power. Thus, ideology contains the potential of becoming a manipulative device as well as an integrative system of beliefs.

Utopia's relationship to this interaction brings in the possibility of bestowing upon the inhabitants of a particular ideological system the ability to achieve a certain distance or detachment from this all-encompassing process of legitimacy. Through its perpetual constitution of alternative *possible worlds*, utopia can obtain the capacity to move beyond the machinations of the ruling ideology. With such an insight, utopia is placed in a commanding position to subvert and transform the very ruling ideology that spawned its existence. Seen in this light, it can provide the opportunity for a reassessment, cutting through the distortion of the existing ideological structure. It is here that utopia's intrinsic connection to power within the social and political realm comes into full view, for this connection lies within the fundamental ground of an ideology's attempt to overcome its crisis of legitimacy. Thus, the utopian imagination interacts with power within the social sphere mainly through the ideological mechanisms that legitimise its exercise. Given this, the dominant ideology seeks to justify the exercise of power as *domination*, and the impulse towards utopia is born out of the discontentment stemming from the discrepancy between an authority's claim to this right and the affirmation of this decree by its subjects.

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<sup>11</sup>Ricouer, Pg. 13-14.

Therefore, ideology and utopia are addressing the same problem; the legitimate division and use of power.<sup>12</sup> However, they are addressing this issue from two varying perspectives or methodologies. Ideology attempts this through the distortion or integration of the perceptions justifying an existing configuration, while utopia seeks to test and subvert these endeavours by visualising possible alternatives. Given their close proximity and common intentions, an inherent danger is involved if a utopia is encompassed within the process of legitimacy undertaken by the dominant ideological structure and if this occurs, the distance (constructive insight) provided by a utopia is lost. It then becomes a useful mechanism for distorting the perceptions concerning the true nature and meaning of the social reality.

In this situation, utopia no longer creates alternatives outside the ruling structure's domain, but only indicates opportunities inherently compatible with its ideological structures. When this occurs, a utopia loses its intrinsic power to subvert the intentions of an authority, and becomes enslaved to them and utilised for its purposes. It becomes a useful device for obscuring and concealing the true nature of the actions that an authority intends to take. The deceptive capacity of this methodology is hard to counteract because of its appearance to undermine or uncover the very actions it is concealing. Thus, within this circumstance, a utopia has betrayed its true endeavour.

Here, the intricacy of the interconnection of power and utopia within the social and political realm is uncovered with the discovery that their central connection rests within the ideological structures of a given society. For the relationship to function in a manner which can provide progressive social reform, utopia must supply alternatives that have the ability to inform the ideological systems of belief legitimising an authority. If, however, the utopian imagination loses its detachment and distance, it serves only to strengthen its dominance. It becomes possibly the singularly most effective tool in the fabrication of an ideological paradigm attempting to negate the true nature of a social reality. In this way, the utopian impulse serves to reinforce the ideological equivalent of the 'Noble Lie' that legitimised the division of power in Plato's *Republic*.<sup>13</sup>

### ***The Interaction of Power and Utopia Within The Political Realm***

Within the continual machinations of political life, many 'idealistic' speculations are deemed utopias and conceived as being opposed to the more 'practical' suggestions emerging from the parties or individuals claiming to be 'political realists'. According to this description,

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., Pg. 17.

<sup>13</sup>See Plato, *The Republic*, 2nd edition. trans. Desmond Lee. (Middle Sex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1974) Pg. 238 (458c) and Pg. 181-182 (414c-415d). Also see note 9 of the introduction of this text.

policies deemed to be carrying utopian connotations lack the important element of practicality and thus, contain no real potential because the targets proposed are higher than what is at the time, overtly feasible. This assertion relates to Marx's contention concerning the role and nature of ideology. By his argument, all utopias, are ideological because their social approaches are pre-scientific, therefore they are making similar demands to those commonly found in many religions. Their portrayal of reality is not founded upon factual data gathered by scientific analysis, but call for a leap of faith or trust in their subjective social visions.<sup>14</sup> As a result, both utopia and ideology are based on a mistaken conception of reality, which is further distorted with the introduction of their proposals.

The undercurrent of the political realist's argument against this 'idealism' stems from a similar conception of the possible as dictated by the surrounding political environment. By this, political ideas are only truly important if they can feasibly build an advocacy which allows a policy to advance easily towards implementation. Therefore, from their conception, they must be intrinsically linked to certain interests, especially those with a ready access to power. To ignore this is to disregard the reality of the social and political sphere and present policies which are merely social dreams or a covert means towards a purposeful deception. Consequently, the realist's argument is implicitly claiming that a policy must implement and reinforce the values of the existing power structure or risk failing to raise the necessary support (power) to actually bring its conceptions to fruition. To go outside this structure then, is to risk alienation from it. This, however, is precisely what the imaginative proposals of the idealist endeavours towards in hopes of discovering an alternative to the modes of control executed by an existing power structure. Hence, it is not necessarily the case that such ideas wouldn't work if they were actually realised, but due to the composition of the present political context and the public opinion surrounding it, implementation of such a proposal is a political impossibility.

This attack centres almost entirely around the notion that a proposal is politically futile because of its failure to build the necessary advocacy needed to acquire the capacity for implementation. Consequently, it is said to be 'out of touch' with the actual dynamics of the social reality. Though advocacy is an important aspect in regards to the potential execution of a policy, the 'realist' argument oversimplifies the complex conditions of society and underestimates the potential influence that such a proposal can acquire given certain minor changes in public opinion. To comprehend the relationship of the 'utopia' to the geography of power encompassing the day to day social actions of a society, it is important to understand the total temporal structure of the political realm. Once this is achieved, the 'realist' assertion of the irrelevance of the 'idealist' can be shown to be less damaging and the potential

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<sup>14</sup>Ricouer, Pg. 6.



machinations influenced by the interaction of utopia and the predominant ideology can be further exposed.

In addressing the claim put forth by the 'realist', an intrinsic oversight on the part of his/her argument must be examined. By establishing the foundations of its attack on notions of advocacy within the present social and political context, the logic of the argument fails to take into account the potential temporal sequence of the implementation process that a proposal undergoes within the political realm. For the purpose of explanation, this sphere can be conceptualised as a arena consisting of a series of concentric rings relating each political party's access to power. Political groups containing the greatest ability to gather support, or in other words those in power, inhabit the centre of this sphere, while others less successful in this, owing to their adherence to more politically radical views, generally inhabit the subsequent rings. The further a party or group is from the centre of this 'arena', the harder it is to access the power base needed for the direct implementation of their proposals and policies.

Though this distance is usually a political hindrance, in some respects a group finding itself in such a position is allowed a certain amount of freedom to experiment with the parameters of the mainstream policies in order to project unique solutions for solving problems ignored or overlooked by the dominant group. Such a luxury is not afforded to the groups in the political 'epicentre' who must maintain their support or risk losing their power base and prominent position. Another factor involved relates to the political temperament towards the centre which innately desires to reinforce the existing contours of the power structure and generally maintains a more conservative agenda less receptive to unfamiliar methodologies to solving social problems. Such desires arise the moment a group becomes dominant and dictates the political agenda, for it then acquires the responsibility for most of the problems contained within society. This is due largely to the perception that events of this nature are directly related to the government's actions. Thus, the admission of the existence of such problems undermines the legitimacy of its claim to govern. When a party or group inhabits this central position of power, its discourse is generally set to deflect criticism, not to test the merit of the existing division of power.

Coupled with these aspects, is a further difficulty faced by a party in a position of authority due to the shortened *temporal span* for the implementation of its policies. This is due to fluctuations in the public interest which forces the time span from the conception of a policy to its implementation to be relatively brief. For this reason, the party at the centre finds the struggle for advocacy almost perpetual, and it is this factor which influences the choice of which policies it will pursue. The content and merit of such proposals play a secondary role to their potential acceptance and reinforcement of a group's image as being able to competently rule. If a party in power continually undertakes actions that are out of touch with mass



opinion, it risks undermining its own power structure through an erosion of belief involving its capacity to govern. Given the importance such a factor plays in the objectives of a modern political group, maintaining power becomes its central interest instead of producing policies that may prove unpopular or can involve too much time for their implementation.

The groups at the periphery, on the other hand, abide by a differing temporal span, one that is greatly lengthened in comparison to the time frame at the centre of the power structure. Actions and proposals undertaken at the periphery of the political realm do not have the same expectation of rapid implementation. Due to this fact, ideas contained within these proposals can be considered more on their possible merit for solving social problems than their potential for political advocacy. Therefore, their potential influence is not reliant on generating direct advocacy, but can be attained through other methods.<sup>15</sup>

The first of these alternative methods involves a situation where a political movement has little or no chance of successfully capturing power or instigating social change on its own, but can become an ideological resource for another movement possessing a greater capacity towards the achievement of this objective. In this scenario, one political movement becomes a preliminary stage in a later ascent to power. In a second possible method of influence, two political movements that seemingly support opposing political agendas can actually contain an underlying similarity of values or social methodologies. In this way, radical fringe groups having little or no chance of exercising power can attain influence through the assimilation of their objectives by a party whose more moderate policies contain a greater chance of placing it in a dominant position within the political sphere.

Hence, in the reality of this realm, all parties regardless of their present position can attain a dominant position of power or influence through an affiliation to, or assimilation by, another group with more acceptable policies to the political mainstream. It must be noted that each group within the political realm has the potential to play an important role and influence the conditions within a society. Given this, the realist's attack seems short-sighted and somewhat premature. Though generally, there is a concerted effort to discredit social and political conceptions which come from outside the discourse propagated by the ruling ideology, it is imperative that such conceptions are examined despite the seeming unfeasibility of their implementation within the political realm of the present. They serve to test the legitimacy of the ruling party by indicating various other possible configurations aiding in the examination of the ideology and actions of the ruling group. So, in reality, it is not of primary importance if a 'utopian' proposal does not acquire widespread support because it can then remain 'on the outside' where the clarity of its perspective is the most poignant. It is from this perspective

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<sup>15</sup>H. J. N. Horsburgh, "The Relevance of The Utopian" in *Ethics*. Volume 57, 1956-57. Pg. 131.

that it contains the greatest ability to detect, clarify, and keep in check the individuals or groups that are dominant.

### ***The Potential Ramifications of This Interaction***

There are several possible consequences, both of a positive and negative nature arising from the interaction of these forces within the social realm. When the relationship of these forces is balanced, the potential for the positive emergence of avenues conducive to the production of certain desired social, political, and cultural circumstances can be revealed. Such insights have the potential to lead to beneficial social reforms which can rectify the circumstances where such possibilities have been mistakenly overlooked or cynically ignored by a society's ruling elite. If the utopian imagination is utilised in its proper role it contains the potential to indicate and provide possible solutions to recurrent problems endemic to the existing social order. This view from *nowhere* can serve as a social gauge and instigator for change within a given social context. When its relationship to the attributes of power are correctly aligned it can focus the social forces of a community towards reforms and programs which aid in the ascendancy of a culture through the production of positive conditions allowing for the freedom, security, and avenues of expression necessary for the creative nature of its inhabitants to emerge.

However, as mentioned earlier, these are not the only possible circumstances which can arise from the interaction of these two attributes within the social arena. If this interaction becomes unbalanced, allowing one force to supersede the other, destructive forces may be released which can damage if not destroy a society or culture altogether. Catastrophic events corresponding to the downside of the attributes of power such as war, revolution, or social violence can emerge and be concealed from public scrutiny through attempts to legitimise socially disintegrative actions through an appeal to the optimism of the social imagination with its underlying utopian content. The manipulation of this social psyche attempts to portray such events as necessary to the life of the culture or community, but in reality, habitually leads to the breakdown of its existing configurations. Generally, when the political charade has been discovered the damage to the social fabric is irreversible. For this reason, understanding the circumstances and effects surrounding the possible development of such events is imperative. Towards this end, our study will now turn to discerning the advent of potentially beneficial social reforms arising from the interaction of these forces.

### *I. The Beneficial Effects: The Possibility of Social Integration and Reform*

Traditionally, within a society's political arena, the introduction of a policy is an action seeking to alleviate a problem and it is this type of solution which the various political groups competing for power propose in an effort to gain the confidence of the population. Given this, political image is of central importance to any party hoping to ascend to a central position of power. To gain the trust of the general population, most parties can ill afford to take risks by proposing innovative, yet politically dangerous proposals which could alleviate many of the recurrent social ills of a given circumstance. Intrinsically, such parties seek to maintain the *status quo* of the existing social configuration by endeavouring to undertake small and measured changes which will be easily acceptable by the population at large. Such strategic moves are imperative for the compilation and maintenance of the solid core of advocacy necessary to remain in power.

Though the groups at the periphery of the political arena may lack the wide-spread advocacy to ascend to power and directly implement their proposals, they do carry with them the unique ability to perceive and speculate upon certain problems contained within the social fabric of a society. This capacity manifests itself in several ways or methods. The first, involves the ability that such groups can have drawing attention to certain social problems continually overlooked or neglected by other parties. Also, such groups can provide the preliminary incentives for their alleviation through the production of images involving their potential solutions.<sup>16</sup> The very traits which hinder such a group or individual at the centre of the political arena becomes a strength at its periphery. This inherent single-mindedness and disregard for political self-gain are characteristics needed for the creation of audacious proposals that can evoke strong social convictions and dislodge public opinion from its state of unquestioning compliance or social apathy. With the visionary's portrayal of the possible solutions to such problems, the truly central issues of the day can be more forcefully depicted and clearly defined. Such clarity eludes a governing party whose central focus is usually the defence of the past decisions or programs serving as the cornerstone of legitimacy for its claim to dominate.

A second ability uniquely located within such a visionary contingent is its aptitude towards drawing attention to certain negative characteristics of a social structure which can progress unacknowledged, is disregarded, or actually concealed by the functionaries of the existing power structure. Such an explanation can shed light on the depth and complexity of certain dilemmas which have been inadequately understood or purposively explained in an obtuse manner by those seeking to lessen the perception of their importance.<sup>17</sup> Such obscurity can be

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<sup>16</sup>Horsburgh, Pg. 134.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

overcome with the production of unpopular solutions and the generation of clever arguments advocating their support undertaken in an ironic manner. By working in the abstract, a certain clarity of thought is achieved that can lay certain social attributes previously hidden by the complexity and machinations of the varying institutions contained within the existing social structure. Such a method becomes an effective apparatus for gaining a new perspective on current social circumstances and can overcome the tunnel vision obscuring the real issues and problems of a particular social circumstance.

A final attribute emerges within the context of the intrepid and obsessive nature of the visionary embodied in its persistent attacks which attempt to pierce the prevailing conspiracy of silence habitually accompanying politically sensitive problems. These relentless attempts to address problems of this nature can counteract the neglect by mainstream politicians due largely to their cynicism or ignorance.<sup>18</sup> The clarity and forcefulness of such proposals can capture the imagination of the populace and force the hand of the influential by placing them in uncomfortable positions on issues where they have traditionally controlled the discourse. Through the instigation of a change in the parameters of the discussion, an individual containing a propensity towards the production of visionary proposals can evoke the ruling authority towards taking the first step in addressing a social problem; the acknowledgement of its existence. Though a visionary contingent of a society may not be able to control the political discourse directly, it can, through the clarity gained from its imaginative proposals acquire a beneficial influence.

These attributes suggest that the proposals produced by the social imagination can fulfil a role within a society as the instigator of new values or an advocate for the reinforcement of existing ones through the realisation of their renewed impact. The ruling contingent of a current social configuration, is often forced into defining the merit of existing policies solely on the feasibility of their acceptance. Visionary proposals, free from the burden of popular acceptance, are afforded the luxury of experimentation and can therefore speculate on social and political problems in a manner removed from the pressures of everyday politics. This detachment allows the validity of a proposal to be based solely on its potential for providing the most efficient and morally acceptable solution to the social problems it seeks to address. This is the primary attribute of the utopian imagination in that it contains the ability to provide forceful and emotive depictions concerning necessary changes to the fabric of a society. It is this capacity which can inform public opinion through the introduction and clarification of specific value conceptions that contains the potential for instigating changes within the social and moral fabric of a society. These values and ideals can, in turn, influence the ideology and political structures of power dictating the day to day social actions affecting the social fabric of

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., Pg. 135.

a culture. Therefore, the utopian contingent may not directly control or influence the practical activities of the political realm, but it does provide a necessary influence on the values and objectives serving to guide them.

## *II. The Negative Effects: The Potential For The Disintegration of the Social Realm*

Running parallel to this potential, is a darker possibility that arises within the context of utopia's interaction with power. Events corresponding to this capacity generally become manifest in the midst of a context embroiled in a tumultuous state of turmoil. Systematic violence, revolution, and war, are all symptomatic of a social system in a cycle of social upheaval. Ironically, such circumstances are directly related to the same play of forces comprising social configurations propagating a harmonious state of affairs. Such events come to the forefront when one of the underlying forces of power or utopia supersedes the other, thus ushering in turbulent or violent social or political transformations. The severity of such events are often utilised as examples of the inevitability of catastrophe of the utopian endeavour by its critics.

As discussed above, such dangers exist whenever an attempt is made to creatively transform or change pre-existing social orders. The emergence of these events serves as a reminder of the dangers involved when the utopian imagination becomes subservient to parties advocating radical transformation through violent means. In such circumstances, the utopian impulse is not the instigator or guide of such actions, but is manipulated into the means legitimising such circumstances. To comprehend how the interaction of power and utopia within the social realm can cause these events, our study will now explore the essential characteristics of the conditions surrounding the potential advent of systematic social violence.

(a) *Social and Political Violence*: Acts of violence within the social context are inextricably linked to the notion of power, yet contain singularly distinct characteristics. Such acts, unlike instances surrounding the exercise of power, are instrumental in nature and therefore rely directly on the use of technological apparatuses, especially surrounding the advent of war. However, despite this reliance on technology, any violent action contains a degree of unpredictability because of the latent potential involving the mutual destruction of both combatants.<sup>19</sup> It is this that bestows upon violence a certain enticing quality and it is this possibility of rupturing the smooth passage of temporal events which has lead writers such as

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<sup>19</sup>Hannah Arendt, *On Violence*. (London: Harvest/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1969) Pg. 4.



Sartre and Sorel, to speculate on its potential to bring about a sudden and radical transformation of existing social structures.<sup>20</sup>

However, though violence can command an ultimate obedience within the short term, to maintain this control over an extended period takes the attribute of power. As Hannah Arendt indicates in her study concerning the nature of violence; "power always stands in need of numbers, whereas violence up to a point can manage without them because it relies on implements."<sup>21</sup> According to this, power corresponds specifically to the capacity to undertake a desired course of action. Therefore, within the complexity of a group or society, this attribute references the circumstance where an individual or ruling elite captures the capacity to dominate others in order to carry out actions corresponding to its desires. Consequently, the most despotic of regimes needs a power base to exist and utilise the available mechanism of violence. However, if a regime's power is consolidated completely and successfully, violence becomes necessary only in rare instances.

Given this, when a governing body resorts to violence, this signifies a substantial loss of power. Hence, the use of violence is indicative of a weakened or semi-impotent power. Power rests on a claim of a legitimacy concerning the right to dominate, while violence openly undermines such a demand. The former rests on rational grounds that a governing body can competently manifest the objectives of the group by the means at its disposal, while the latter can claim no such attribute because its use signifies a lack of confidence in such matters. Due to this intrinsic irrationality, violence can never be legitimate, but it can nevertheless be justified. The legitimacy of power rests on the competence exhibited pertaining to its decisions and their consequences contained within the past. The justification for violent actions is sought through an appeal to an end envisioned within the future.<sup>22</sup> It relies on the argument that the end justifies the means, though in actual fact, the extent of the ramifications of violent actions can rarely be accurately predicted. It is here that the utopian spirit demanding the 'wiping clean' of the societal slate mistakenly creates a puzzling enigma, for its claims of rational perfection are undermined by its demand for the occurrence, in the first instance, of an irrational act.

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<sup>20</sup>See J. P. Sartre's preface to Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of The Earth*. trans. Constance Farrington (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1967) Pg. 18. Within this text, Sartre states "...irrepressible violence is neither sound and fury, nor the resurrection of savage instincts, nor the effect of resentment: it is man re-creating himself." See also, Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*. trans. T. E. Hulme & J. Roth. (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1950) Pg. 302. Sorel describes a certain potential virtue of violence with the statement; "Social war, by marking an appeal to the honour which develops so naturally in all organised armies, can eliminate those evil feelings against which morality would remain powerless".

<sup>21</sup>Arendt, Pg. 42. This point is further elaborated upon by Arendt with the statement; "The extreme form of power is All against One, The extreme form of violence is One Against All. And the latter is never possible without instruments."

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., Pg. 52.

Throughout history, instances have arisen where a weakened government will resort to violent acts in order to end the haemorrhaging of its control. After utilising such means it will seek to provide a justification for such events through a barrage of propaganda that manipulates the emotions of the populace. A highly emotive imagery is created supposedly advocating a means that will create better social conditions. In this way, the desires and fears of the masses are accessed to provide the pretext for acts of torture, murder, and oppression. Such actions are generally undertaken under the guise of a 'cause' described as necessary for the stability of a society or radical transformations necessary to it. In this way, the 'objectives' envisioned by the utopian imagination are cynically harnessed to construct a deceptive apparatus concealing the brutal actions of a ruling elite against the 'enemies of the people'. This image is utilised to focus the remainder of the societal forces loyal to its command towards the consolidation of its power base by removing all perceived threats to its position. All collateral damage to the social fabric is blocked from view by the brightness of the vision propagated by the regime in order to conceal the violence undertaken against its own people.

(b) *Revolution*: The instability brought on by the use of violence can also work against an authority to undermine and weaken its ability to dominate. When this capacity becomes so compromised that a regime cannot effectively rule, it is superseded or overthrown by another party in an event generally described as a political revolution. Such an event was outlined by Aristotle as *metabole kai stasis*, and pertains to the cycle of dramatic changes and uprisings which occur periodically within a given political circumstance.<sup>23</sup> Thus, a revolutionary circumstance is commonly embodied by a sudden tumultuous change within the existing process of governing that instigates political tremors throughout the whole of the social order.

However, this conventional perception of a sudden political fissure is based on the rather detached view of historian's accounts of such events. What seems sudden and catastrophic to subsequent generations, may for those involved, appear as part of a gradual process of incremental transformations culminating in such an event. If this view is taken to the extreme, the whole of history would have to be considered as one continuous revolution. Therefore, it is imperative to limit the focus to incorporate and include the tumultuous ramifications of the changes occurring at various definitive temporal junctures within the world's history.<sup>24</sup>

This turbulent end result is often brought about by the interaction of a multitude of singular factors, all necessary, but in themselves insufficient to actuate such events. Preceding such situations is generally a period of latent unrest which explodes when certain social factors merge unifying formerly disparate grievances against a regime. As Tocqueville observed

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<sup>23</sup>Eugene Kamenka, "The Concept of a Political Revolution" in *Revolution, Nomos VIII*. ed. Carl J. Friedrich. (New York: Atherton Press 1969) Pg. 124.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid*.

during the French Revolution, the social instability that is the harbinger of a revolution can arise at what seems the most paradoxical of moments;

"Thus it was precisely in those parts of France where there had been most improvement that popular discontent ran highest. This may seem illogical-but history is full of such paradoxes. For it is not always when things are going from bad to worse that revolutions break. On the contrary, it oftener happens that when a people which has put up with an oppressive rule over a long period without protest suddenly finds the government relaxing its pressure, it takes up arms against it.....Patiently endured so long as it seemed beyond redress, a grievance comes to appear intolerable once the possibility of removing it crosses men's minds. For the mere fact that certain abuses have been remedied draws attention to others and they now appear more galling; people may suffer less, but their sensibility is exacerbated."<sup>25</sup>

An indication of an important factor concerning the emergence of the final phase of an uprising is found within this quote in the form of a renewed awakening of a long dormant discontent. Members of a group with revolutionary intentions will often seek to raise support and incite action by propagating images of a new social order which raises the expectations of the general populace. Such expectations serve to accentuate and inflame the discontentment felt by a population. In such a situation, a revolutionary discourse will describe the need for progress and demand the transformation of the existing social configuration to alleviate specific hardships immediately. It is within this context of greater social expectations that the function of the utopian imagination can most efficiently capture the attention of the public and influence the growing desire for change. By providing the visions outlining the potential of a new social order, it can become an influential factor for the manifestation of such changes. By focusing the various disparate perceptions contained within a society into a unified force acting to bring down and replace the crumbling foundations of the existing social structure.

However, there is a certain danger involved in these expectations which can become detached from the immediate reality and lead a movement towards the instigation of events leading to catastrophic consequences for the society as a whole. Such events also occurred within the context of the revolution in France:

"Thus alongside the traditional and confused, not to say chaotic, social system of the day there was gradually built up in men's minds an imaginary ideal society in which all was simple, uniform, coherent, equitable, and rational in the full sense of the term. It was this vision of the perfect State that fired the imagination of the masses and little by little estranged them from the here-and-now. Turning away from the real world around them, they indulged in dreams of a far better one and ended up living, spiritually, in the ideal world thought up by the writers."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Ancien Regime and The French Revolution*. trans. Stuart Gilbert. (Manchester: Collins/Fontana, 1976) Pg. 196.

<sup>26</sup>Tocqueville, Pg. 167.

This observation exhibits the threat that is posed if the imagination of the masses is fired by images which are not just incongruent, but completely removed from the real state of affairs surrounding their creation. When such imagery becomes prevalent, the demands for change becomes increasingly irrational and violent action often ensues. Consequently, visions of a supposed impending reality procured through violent means generally doesn't precede the implementation of an new harmonious order where all involved in the revolution will be rewarded. Usually quite the opposite circumstance is forthcoming.

Habitually stemming from the emergent chaotic circumstances incited through an irresponsible manipulation of the mass psyche, a more consolidated and despotic power will arise from the remnants of the old regime. Traditionally, once the old state apparatus is destroyed by an anarchist movement, another stronger, more centralised and repressive regime is installed by those who lead the revolt 'of the people'. Within recent centuries, this trend of the centralisation of power within this form of movement has become more than just a possibility, it has become the foregone conclusion of the revolutionary methodology.<sup>27</sup> This method has proved to be an efficient means of organising a diffused society into a structure of centralised power and authority.<sup>28</sup> Here, the paradoxical consequences of ideals are exhibited most profoundly within the context of the social events that are endemically violent, for a revolution instigates a cycle of violence seeking to dismantle the existing social apparatus. This in itself is an act of negation, designed to undermine a rational political construct with the irrational and unpredictable nature of violence. After this negation, the same movement then seeks to reinstate and maintain an even more rationalised social organisation through similar means.<sup>29</sup> Thus, far from delivering an entirely new social configuration delivering the individual freedom promised, most revolutions only replace a weakened power, with a stronger, more consolidated one

(c) *War*: Related to this potential for the manipulation of the social imagination for the instigation of violence within a specific social and political context, is the ability to evoke aggressive behaviour and a bellicose policy against another society. The same potential that rests in certain visionary images allowing them to be utilised by a state apparatus in the cynical justification of violent acts of oppression lodged against certain societal factions within its

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<sup>27</sup>Kamenka, Pg. 131.

<sup>28</sup>Bertrand de Jouvenel. *On Power: The Natural History of its Growth* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1993) Pg. 238. Jouvenel points out the seeming inevitability of this outcome; "The Cromwells and Stalins are no fortuitous consequence, no accidental happening of the revolutionary tempest. Rather, they are its predestined goal, towards which the entire upheaval was moving inevitably, the cycle began with the downfall of an inadequate power only to close with the consolidation of a more absolute power." See also Albert Camus, *The Rebel*. trans. Anthony Bower. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd./Hamish Hamilton, 1953) Pg. 146-156.

<sup>29</sup>Peter Calvert, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*. (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1990) Pg. 76. On this point, Calvert is following a line of argument established by Hannah Arendt in her book, *On Revolution*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1962) Pg. 14-15.



domain, can also be used to motivate the varying groups and interests comprising a society to unify under the singular intention of extending this domain. Consequently, there is a distinct relation between ideals and acts of war. Such relations are similar to those found between the conception of certain ideals or values and systematic acts of social violence or revolution. The central difference is that these occurrences are internal and the act of war is an external endeavour. In other words, it is the overt manifestation of an intentionally violent foreign policy. The comprehension of how and why such imagery is utilised demands the clarification of the definition of war and some of the characteristic intentions behind it.

An act of war, as Clausewitz defines it, "...is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will."<sup>30</sup> Therefore, one must assume that the actions involved in war are undertaken with a specific intention directing the application of force involved. There is a specific end which is to be brought about by the means utilised in war. This ultimate aim can be instigated by one of two possible hostile motives; one based on passion, the other on rational intentions. Within the highly involved nature of modern societies, the latter is a more predominant motive than the former. Nevertheless, it is possible for the members of the most highly evolved civilisation to be provoked into taking rash and violent actions through the provocation of a passionate hatred which can circumvent their faculty for rational decisions. Such actions can be evoked by a government through the manipulation of pre-existing fears and distrust of the *other*. Though war may not emerge solely on the basis of the passions of hatred and distrust, such emotions surface in tandem to the original intention, intensity, and duration of the subsequent use of force.<sup>31</sup>

Consequently, it is at this point that the utility of the utopian vision in regards to undertaking a campaign of war is exhibited because of its ability to mobilise support for such an action. Though a government may have a hostile intention which is rather rational and pre-mediated, it will utilise the emotive potential of the utopian imagination to manipulate certain passions contained within the populace. Images evoking the idealisation of one's culture by contrasting it with misrepresentations of another culture are often used to unify disparate factions in order to undertake a mobilisation for war under the provision of a common enemy.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*. ed. & trans. Michael Howard & Peter Paret. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976) Pg. 75.

<sup>31</sup>Clausewitz, Pg. 76. "Savage peoples are ruled by passion, civilised peoples by the mind."

<sup>32</sup>Erich Fromm, *The Fear of Freedom*. ed. Karl Mannheim. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1942) Pg. 155. Fromm indicates the power of such emotions in his statement; "Love, duty, conscience, patriotism have been and are being used as disguises to destroy others or oneself. However, we must differentiate between two different kinds of destructive tendencies. There are destructive tendencies which result from a specific situation; as reaction to attacks on one's own or others' life and integrity, or on ideas which one is identified with. This kind of destructiveness is the natural and necessary concomitant of one's affirmation of life....In most cases the destructive impulses, however,



*Once again: war is an instrument of policy.* It must necessarily bear the character of policy and measure by its standards. The conduct of war, in its great outlines, is therefore policy itself, which takes up the sword in place of the pen, but does not on that account cease to think according to its laws."<sup>33</sup> This statement indicates that war is considered as a potential outcome of the political activities of a nation state and therefore cannot be separated from them. As is the case with other activities that are political by nature, the instigation of a campaign of war needs the advocacy of certain groups with a wide-range of interests. To overcome these divisions, a political regime advocating aggressive action will attempt to appeal to a trait which all these groups share; a common cultural heritage. This common trait is accentuated by myths and naive perceptions concerning the traditions within the culture, while simultaneously propagating an alarmist campaign claiming the existence of outside threats. It is a call to motivate action by pandering to the idealisations, fears, and desires, which comprise the wealth of images defining the meaning of one's existence. Thus, war and politics are intricately connected and just as political actions can be instigated through support built upon policies that unify disparate interests under a singular social conception, acts of war can be similarly justified.

Though the calls to take up arms is often accompanied with visions of dramatic transformations, changes instigated by such actions are rarely predictable. Consequently, the stability which is wrought as petty interests are put aside in the name of a 'cause' is jeopardised and undermined by the volatile and uncertain nature of war. Hence, the more protracted and destructive the war becomes, the more dramatic the changes, and the more unstable the social structure involved as its future becomes increasingly uncertain.<sup>34</sup> Given this, war on a limited scale, seems to have the potential to produce a certain unity within the structures of a society. However, the actual outbreak of fighting traditionally signifies the beginning of the end for a civilisation.<sup>35</sup> Also, the transformations or changes produced within the context of wars are generally not of a progressive nature, but are merely turbulent fluctuations in the civilising process of Mankind. As Quincy Wright states in his extensive examination of war; "What persistent evolution there has been in human history is not due to

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are rationalised in such a way that at least a few other people or a whole social group share in the rationalisation and thus make it appear to be 'realistic' to the member of such a group."

<sup>33</sup>Clausewitz, Pg. 606. The capacity for unification of this policy is described with the statement; "It can be taken as agreed that the aim of policy is to unify and reconcile all aspects of internal administration as well as of spiritual values, and whatever else the moral philosopher may care to add. Policy, of course, is nothing in itself; it is simply the trustee for all these interests against the outside world. That it can err, subserve the ambitions, private interests, and vanity of those in power, is neither here nor there. In no sense can the art of war ever be regarded as the preceptor of policy, and here we can only treat policy as representative of all interest of the community."

<sup>34</sup>Quincy Wright, *A Study of War*. 2nd edition. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965) Pg. 128.

<sup>35</sup>Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*. 3 Vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934) Pg. 134.

war but to thought. The Alexanders, Caesars, and Napoleons have produced oscillations; the Aristotles, Archimedes', Augustines, and Galileos have produced progress."<sup>36</sup>

### ***Reflections on The Potential of The Interaction of Power and Utopia within the Social Realm***

Within the context of the preceding chapter, our study has explored both the creative and destructive potential of the interaction of the utopian imagination and the exercise of power. Events ranging from positive social reforms to events such as revolution and war have been explored to discover how this fundamental interaction influences the essential parameters comprising the various civilisations of Man. Consistently throughout this study, a paradox has arisen which seems to be intrinsically bound to the evolutionary process of human culture. Consequently, it is the very nature of this process which led Freud to speculate; 'The process of evolution of culture' includes 'the best of what we have become,' as well as 'a good part of what we suffer from.'<sup>37</sup>

Given this, the very same elements and influences which aid in the progressive creation of human culture can also interact to facilitate its eventual downfall and annihilation. The social relationship of the utopian imagination and the intentions underlying the exercise of power serve as important propagators of change whose influence can never be underestimated. What must be guarded against is the changes instigated by this process that are not necessarily heralding the creation of culture, but its destruction. Thus, the social transformations instigated through the evolutionary process relating to the interaction of the influential attributes of power, ideology, and utopia, should be measured and incremental. (See chapter 7) Though violent events such as war and revolution may capture the mass imagination and appear to be instigating radical transformations on a huge scale, they rarely bring about truly beneficial changes or a lasting stability. Such convulsive cycles take on a life of their own resulting in the manifestation of circumstances generally beyond the dreams or wishes of those desiring their occurrence. Habitually, such events rarely end at the point envisioned by their supporters at the beginning of the process.

Moreover, it is imperative to understand both the dynamic role of the destructive as well as the creative tendencies contained within the process of socialisation within a culture. Coupled with this should be a comprehension of the roles of the mental constructs fabricated to interpret and inform the human actions undertaken to fabricate the material reality. Moreover, an

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<sup>36</sup>Wright, Pg. 131.

<sup>37</sup>Sigmund Freud, *Civilisation and Its Discontents*. in *The Standard Edition of The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. trans. James Stacy. Vol. XXI. (1930) Pg. 124. *Op. cit.*: Daniel Pick, *War Machine: The Rationalisation of Slaughter in The Modern Age*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) Pg. 220.

attempt must also be made to discern and regulate the various intensities of these forces within specific conditions. A balanced interaction of power and utopia is an integral part of a positive civilising process and influences the creation of a culture at an ideological level. Both of these influences are necessary for the proper formation of a culture, and ironically, the very same influences can spell its demise as well.

Accordingly, several important points have surfaced within the context of our discussion concerning the interaction of these forces which should be duly noted. In the first place, the proper balance of these forces is imperative if the ascendancy of a culture is to be maintained. If one supersedes or attempts to manipulate the other, catastrophic events can arise. Also, the most beneficial position of utopia within the social realm is detached from the everyday political machinations of this realm. It should serve as a standard with which to measure the machinations of power involved within the political sphere. Finally, the forces of power and utopia are integral parts of the continuous evolution of a culture, but are still driven by desire. Therefore, the arguments condemning the utopian imagination; overlook the fact that it is as necessary to this realm as the attribute of power. One must remember that it is still the real intentions behind the actions of men which must be held morally accountable, not the specific vision of society they claim to advocate.

## **Chapter VI:**

### ***Power, Utopia, and The Manipulation of The Historical Consciousness***

*Monumental history lives by false analogy; it entices the brave to rashness, and the enthusiastic to fanaticism by its tempting comparisons. Imagine this history in the hands-and the head of-a gifted egoist or an inspired scoundrel; kingdoms will be overthrown, princes murdered, war and revolution let loose, and the number of 'effects in themselves'-in other words, effects without sufficient cause-increased. So much for the harm done by monumental history to the powerful men of action, be they good or bad; but what if the weak and the inactive take it as their servant-or their master!*

*Nietzsche, "The Use and Abuse of History"*<sup>1</sup>

From the study undertaken in the last chapter which centred on the influential role that power and utopia play in the shaping events within the social realm, our exploration can now turn towards uncovering their effects on a society's conception of its historical past and the traditions stemming from it. Often, it is this 'historical perspective' that serves as the foundation for the production of propaganda which seeks to capture the imagination of the populace in an effort to instigate certain social actions. The discussion undertaken within this chapter will seek to uncover the role that the 'historical consciousness' of a society plays in the creation of propaganda, the moulding of public opinion, and their effects on social praxis. When approaching this issue, certain questions begin to surface surrounding the essential characteristics involving the bond between individuals that allows a community or collective to

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<sup>1</sup>Nietzsche, "The Use and Abuse of History" in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche: Thoughts out of Season*. Vol. II, Part II. ed. Dr. Oscar Levy. (Edinburgh: T.N. Foulis, 1909) Pg. 21.

form and perpetuate. In other words, this chapter will set out to explore the intrinsic characteristics of the collective perceptions and ideals that are frequently manipulated in order to strengthen the process of ideological integration that underlies any social intervention.

An aspect that could fulfil the role of such a characteristic emerges within the collective body of individuals that encounter similar experiences within their present circumstances. Cognate views, tastes, and fears provide the impetus for the forging of a unity of spirit generally found in the social formations of Man. In times of perceived danger from outside adversarial forces; issues of race, class, religious or political beliefs, can be transcended to provide a unified front against a perceived threat to common interests.<sup>2</sup> Within any social structure, there is a myriad of forces that unify and forge a spirit of community between individuals usually holding disparate interests. Though this explanation goes some way in describing the primary stimulus for this bonding procedure, it leaves unexplained the enduring identification of an individual to their 'home' country when living within another culture. Present experiences and perceptions can only partly explain these feelings, thereby leaving open the possibility that there are other factors acting upon an individual that serve to reinforce these connective feelings. In correlation to this, the overriding question of this chapter then becomes; What are these influences and from what sources do they traditionally arise?

A possible response to this lies within the connections felt between individuals who share a common heritage. The underlying perception of the traditions which reinforce these bonds are, in turn, influenced by the interpretations of this past that are constructed by each succeeding generation's historians. These cultural interpreters serve to translate the past within the context of the present and are crucial contributors to the formulation of a communal identity based on interpretations involving the ramifications of the exploits of preceding generations. The prevailing view involving these events and the traditions stemming from them serve as the foundation for a population's beliefs and values, thus, making it a fertile ground for the calls of loyalty accompanying actions on behalf of the society as a whole.

It is this fundamental ground that both the impulse to power and the utopian imagination draw heavily upon to produce an imagery that either coincides or subverts the existing structures and institutions of a society. Accordingly, the production of historical interpretations by certain groups can directly influence the perceptions and expectations of its members. Given its basis on subjective interpretation, the methodology of history can be

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<sup>2</sup>Michael Balfour, *Propaganda in War 1939-1945: Organisations, Policies, and Publics, in Britain and Germany*. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979) Pg. 420. The author asserts that people are generally inclined to favour the interpretations of persons sharing the same environment and will habitually reject those perceptions formulated by others who do not share a common experience.



utilised to bring about an independent, objective, and neutral account of the past that creates a healthy enthusiasm and sense of community, or it can be distorted to legitimise certain questionable social actions or beliefs. With the latter, the objective search for the intrinsic nature of past events is given over to the formulation and reinforcement of certain prejudices. It seeks to paint a distorted view that instils a false sense of tradition that fallaciously placates or provokes under purposely deceptive pretences. It is the discovery of the characteristics underlying the potential utilisation of the historical perspective which will be the task-at-hand for this exploration. Our theoretical point of departure is the assertion that the methodology of history can have either advantageous or negative consequences on a specific social circumstance depending upon the intentions behind an interpretation. Within this context, history emerges as containing the potential to serve as a useful device for both an existing power structure or the forces seeking to undermine its authority.

### *I. The Interrelation of Utopia, Power, History*

The influence of utopia upon the historical perspective emerges with the inadvertent injection of the values, ideals, and beliefs, into the formulation of the accounts of past events by the historian. This occurs, because complete objectivity is impossible, owing to the bias intrinsically inflicted on an individual by the prevailing intellectual tendencies and beliefs of the present. In reality, since human perceptions are fundamentally interwoven within the intellectual fabric of such a context, a complete detachment from its prevalent conceptions is difficult. Consequently, the belief systems serving as the foundation to the surrounding social structures will invariably taint any account as well as the reader's interpretation of it. If such an account is then widely circulated and accepted, new perceptions emerge informing the fundamental characteristics of a community's self-identity.

This method is beneficial if the view reinforces or creates noble values and ideals which are then adopted by the mass public. For example, if an image of a society's past describing its endeavour to produce an equalitarian society is propagated, certain social programs seeking to aid the less fortunate of its members will stand a greater possibility of achieving popular support. In this way, values and ideals found implicitly within prevalent historical interpretations can encourage the forging of a unified identity capable of orchestrating proposals for solutions to recurrent social problems. Contrary to this possibility however, is the danger that historical images and the mythology built around them, can become merely compensatory and produce the illusion that certain problems are non-existent or are already

being addressed. Such imagery can incite a sense of denial, leading to a latent apathy. This weakens the sense of urgency necessary for accumulating the support that could bring about a potential solution. Such a state of affairs can emerge naturally from the interaction of social forces or be produced intentionally through the manipulation of prevailing mass perceptions.

These intentional manoeuvres are similar in method, but opposite in effect, to the benevolent potential of the historical perspective. Such machinations contain the capacity to create certain conditions that can carry over to future generations. A political force can seize power and subsequently maintain control through the creation of a mythology of historical traditions that affect the minds of the populace. Such conspiracies provide the mental conditioning that enables the control of popular opinion through the use of propaganda and are usually undertaken by 'historians' that are somehow intellectually indentured to the regime in power at the time. Accounts of this nature, massage the portrayal of historical events to provide a legitimate facade shrouding the true nature of the intentions and actions of the ruling elite from public scrutiny.

A good example of such a method was utilised by Julius Caesar in the accounts formulated to describe his conquest of the northern territories of the Roman empire. These were personal accounts given by Caesar himself, but formulated in the third person in order to give them the appearance of being an objective historical account. In reality, their purpose was not to be an unbiased description of these events, but to provide the basis for a formidable political image that would facilitate the defeat of his political adversaries in Rome and pave the way for a seizure of power. This act would ultimately result in his crowning as the supreme emperor of Rome, and as history reveals, it achieved its underlying objective effectively by securing his place as one of the pre-eminent figures of world history. This circumstance serves as an explicit illustration of the point indicated by Ernst Toller in his statement: *History is the propaganda of the victors.*<sup>3</sup>

Coupled with this potential of concealing the true intentions behind a political agenda, a ruling power can also manipulate the idealistic or utopian tendency found within the collective mentality comprising social structures. It undertakes such an action by depicting the events unfolding within the present as the fulfilment of prophecy based on a mythical historical tradition. Such accounts are highly questionable in their validity as serious expositions of past events, but they do begin to indicate the extent that subjective interpretation has in any historical account. Consequently, a cynically dishonest account can acquire a wide-spread influence if presented strategically. By conveniently rewriting the past, it is possible for a

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<sup>3</sup>Quoted in Balfour, Pg. xvi.

government to create or reinforce certain prejudices in order to gather support for certain political endeavours that are potentially unpopular by portraying them favourably in light of a historical myth. To this end, a regime creates a history that serves to legitimise its present day political agenda, and by utilising the concept of tradition, it stands a greater chance of success in mobilising the differing groups which comprise a community into a collective conducive to the implementation of its policies.

Before endeavouring to undertake our task-at-hand, it is imperative to clarify the theoretical implications of the phrase; 'the mobilisation of societal groups or forces'. Throughout this study, there has been an examination of the role that the concepts of power and utopia play in the instigation of such occurrences, but it is essential within the context of the 'historical consciousness' to provide a clear definition of the parameters involved in this statement. This clarification will supply a rough mental picture of how the notion of history influences the emergence of this type of event. Such a description will be a 'working definition', guiding the discourse of the chapter as it unfolds, and serving as the departure point for the exploration of the importance of the historical influence and the subsequent propaganda it generates.

## *II. History and The Mobilisation of Social Groups or Forces*

With the description of the mobilisation of social forces, a process is being identified whereby a group or society is transformed from a collective of passive individuals with differing views to a group with a unified mentality actively participating in unison to achieve certain common objectives. Through such a movement, one group or individual can begin to influence others in order to gain control over a large portion of the resources and assets of the public formerly controlled by individuals or groups with diverse interests. Thus, when describing the mobilisation of such forces, an account is being given of an enhanced capacity to control and utilise resources which serve as the operative in any social or political context.<sup>4</sup> Such assets generally fall into three approximate categories of classification. The first, *coercive*, describes the resources of a society involving its military strength and subsequent technologies. The second category consists of those goods, information services, and other general currency which contain a *utilitarian* purpose within a society. And the third and final category, *normative*, involves gaining a means of control by utilising certain loyalties or obligations amongst the various groups or interests comprising a society.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Charles Tilly, *From Mobilisation to Revolution*. (Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1978) Pg. 69.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

Manipulation of the 'historical consciousness' falls under the *normative* category, because its intentions centre on the building of support through the instigation of loyalty. This sense of obligation is evoked through the propagation of a certain image or perception, based on either true facts or fabrications. Once certain loyalties are reinforced or created by this process, it is possible to begin to control resources found within the other two categories, thereby giving the ruling elite an expanded repertoire of controlling devices and strengthening its position for substantial political action. It is in this way that the wealth of potential found within the social configurations of Man can be utilised to endeavour upon the materialisation of certain singular intentions.

Through the usage of a society's latent preconceptions, a politically astute regime can set a propaganda machine into motion that can legitimise the most irrational of proposals. To understand how conditions emerge which afford such opportunities, it is imperative to ascertain the essential nature, object, and meaning behind the historical endeavour. Once this is achieved, some of the key aspects of the paradoxical influence of the relationship of power and utopia endemic to human societies can be explicated and clarified further. The primary step in this procedure is to explore the inherent assumptions involved in our fundamental precepts involving history. Therefore, certain factors involved in the act of recounting past events must be explored to uncover their intrinsic influence in the formation of the collective spirit underlying a social configuration.

### ***The Essential Nature of History***

The sequential process of history and the compilation of the historical consciousness is a segment of Mankind's experience and knowledge of the world that embodies several aspects unique to its object; i.e. the disclosure of events contained within the past. This endeavour involves the examination of incidents which have already occurred within the space/time continuum of the world and cannot be understood through other methodologies involving the interpretation of events contained within the human experience of reality. Other techniques, such as those associated with mathematics or the other sciences are unable to fully ascertain the significance of such events because the interpretation of their content and meaning may be void of a specific location or material evidence within the present. This condition foregoes the potential production of a paradigm enabling the first hand observation of their apparent effects or influences. Thus, such methodologies cannot discern the full implications of this specific

kind of event because their procedures are based on observation and experimentation, which lend themselves to objects or events that can be verified empirically at the time of their initial occurrence. Hence, owing to the fact that avenues of observation of many of the events contained within the past have subsequently vanished, it is difficult to obtain statistical data proving or verifying a hypothesis about a historical event conclusively. Consequently, the factors surrounding the methodology of history are unique in many respects in comparison to other methods of enquiry.

Therefore, if history is the unique form of thought which many of its constituent components seem to indicate, to fully apprehend its endeavour, several issues surrounding its essential nature, object, process, and value, must be explored. This type of exploration into the philosophy of history inevitably opens a 'Pandora's box' of conflicting interpretations concerning its nature, but amongst all this theoretical strife, the possibility of forging a rough consensus involving its essential characteristics is possible. However, for this to succeed, many of the preconceived notions concerning history must be dispelled, allowing for the true nature of this activity to come to light. Thus, to comprehend the implications of the historical consciousness and its influence on human actions, it is imperative to examine the prevalent preconceptions involving its essential nature.

### *I. The Nature, Object, Method, and Value of History*

The first question pertaining to this exploration involves the fundamental nature of history, or simply what history is. As Collingwood describes it, intrinsically, history is a form of research or investigation.<sup>6</sup> Generally, it is for this reason that the connection between history and science is often made. The actions underlying both methods are based on the formulation of questions and then speculating on the potential answers indicated by evidence gathered through an investigative procedure. To this point, the historical method corresponds directly to the methods of science due to its concern with the uncovering of data needed to reinforce or dispel speculative hypotheses created to direct its investigations. Therefore, at this level, history may be considered a science, but in reality, such similarities are superficial.

For if history is to be defined as the enquiry into a particular subject matter, then some form of object is encompassed within its methodology. The specificity of the categories of the sciences differ primarily in their chosen subject matter, for the actual techniques of

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<sup>6</sup>R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946) Pg. 9.



investigation are often quite similar. The 'science' of history is no exception, because it focuses on a specific object; the past. Thus, the *object* involved in the enquiry of the historical methodology is the human events and actions which have already taken place somewhere in the temporal horizon of the past. Since the parameters comprising this horizon are vast, a historian's investigation can involve events occurring anywhere from yesterday to thousands and thousands of years ago. As a result, at an essential level, history is set apart from the other sciences in that its object is to discern events or actions undertaken by humans that transpired somewhere in a previous time period.

How does history discern the events of the past when the actual circumstances and people involved no longer exist? The answer lies in the fact that history's speculative results are based on the *interpretation* of evidence that survives from the actual conditions surrounding the events and actions under investigation by the historian.<sup>7</sup> Such evidence may be in the form of documents or material objects which constituted the environment where a past episode took place. With such documentation, the historian must interpret and speculate upon the importance of such elements in answering the questions guiding the enquiry. Regardless of the potential outcome of the various investigations or techniques, fundamentally, the historical method of investigation finds its basis on the interpretation of evidence intrinsically connected to some event that occurred in the past.

The question now arises involving the notion of *why* humans feel it is necessary to undertake such investigations. What is hoped to be achieved by attempting such inquiries and what are their inherent *value* to Man? The response lies in Mankind's perpetual quest for self-knowledge.<sup>8</sup> It is the study of past events that provides Man useful insights into the peculiarities of being human. By endeavouring to investigate the events of past lives, an individual inhabiting the present can discover what separates the characteristics of its existence from that of others as well as its attributes and limitations. In this search for self-knowledge amongst the events of the past, man learns what can be achieved in the present by what has been achieved before. So, essentially, history is the enquiry and interpretation of the significance of events and actions that have transpired in the past. Its inquiry seeks self-knowledge, and it's intrinsic value lies in its presentation of human achievements in the past which can indicate avenues of potential within the future.

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., Pg. 10.

## II. The Science of History

Generally, within many of the descriptions concerning the essential nature of history, reference is made to its intrinsic resemblance to the methods of science. Indeed, such phrases as 'the human science' or 'the science of Man' are quite common within discussions concerning this endeavour. Such descriptions would seem to run counter to the assertion that the object of the history could not be apprehended by the empirically based procedures of science. As mentioned above, these descriptions are referring to the outward appearance of its procedures and not to its content or object. The procedures of the natural sciences are based on systems of interconnected concepts allowing for the designation of specific categories that denote the universal connections between particular elements.

In other words, the knowledge of the *universal* in the natural sciences is the theoretical framework that allows the extrapolation of the specific characteristics of the *particular*. Hence, the methodology of the natural sciences utilises the connections between general concepts to discern the characteristics of singular elements. History, on the other hand, starts from a knowledge of the particular and moves towards indicating a universal. It is from the results of its investigation into the nature of particular events that certain connections are made which serve to define the universal characteristics of being human. Therefore, where natural science seeks to discover the general theory that can explain particular events, history seeks to explain the nature of particular events directly, and in doing so, implies their connections to the universal.<sup>9</sup>

Owing to this emphasis on the *particular*, the knowledge gained from historical investigations is somewhat imperfect or incomplete. To a certain degree all the enquiries of Man succumb to this incompleteness, but in the case of history, due to the elusive nature of its subject matter, it is notably so. Consequently, historical knowledge is highly subjective because speculation on the characteristics of the general emerges from an inadequate knowledge of the particular components comprising its subject-matter. Therefore, it cannot be thought of as being *objective*, in the sense normally reserved for the other sciences, because the data it gathers does not refer to concepts that are readily verifiable.

As a result, the knowledge of the *universal* in the historical sense, is actually descendent from the knowledge of a particular in the same manner as a knowledge of the singular parts can allow informed speculation on the constitution of the nature of the unified whole. This

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<sup>9</sup>Arthur Schopenhauer, "On History" in *The World as Will and Representation*. Vol. II. trans. E. F. J. Payne. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1958) Pg. 440.

exemplifies a marked difference from the enterprise of Natural science which seeks to verify that a singular manifested event coincides with the general rule. This process of verification is the ultimate aim in the formulation of a general concept which will explain a system within the natural sciences instead of the discovery and interpretation of singular facts. Thus, in the case of the natural sciences, it may be possible to obtain an in-depth definition of a particular incident with the knowledge of the general rule that underlies it, but with the historical endeavour this can never be possible.<sup>10</sup> Hence, natural science can be described as seeking a universal and objective knowledge, while history speculates upon a more particular or subjective one.

Coinciding with this first difference, is the uniqueness of the problem encountered when a historical investigation attempts to ascertain information from the reconstruction of past events. Nature, the object of the scientist, presents itself in the form of phenomena usually accessible by methods based on empirical observation, while the subject of the historian, past actions and circumstances, cannot be experienced in terms of a direct sensual experience. The historian uses his evidence less in the sense of its being the object examined, and more in the manner of its being a type of lens allowing him to discover the real subject of his investigation: the thought instigating such events. Collingwood describes this characteristic in his exploration concerning the attributes of history:

"For science, the event is discovered by perceiving it, and the further search for its cause is conducted by assigning it to its class and others. For history, the object to be discovered is not the mere event, but the thought expressed in it. After the historian has ascertained the facts, there is no further process of enquiry into their causes. When he knows what happened, he already knows why it happened."<sup>11</sup>

With this statement, Collingwood illustrates the fact that with the study of nature, the scientist seeks to describe concepts explaining the reason and causes behind the sequence of events constituting its processes as they become manifest. The investigative techniques of the historian seeks an explanation of a different type. Contrary to the popular conception of it, the historical process is not a progressive sequence of events, but is actually a process of actions with a singular root cause, thought. What the historian is endeavouring to discover is the process of human thought that instigated the actions and events that comprise the past. According to Collingwood, when speaking of history, one is describing the history of

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., Pg. 441.

<sup>11</sup>Collingwood, Pg. 214.

thought.<sup>12</sup> So, in essence, the procedure of history seeks to decode and explain the process of human thought, while the methodology of science *proper* seeks to unravel the mysteries of the natural process underlying the manifest events of Nature.<sup>13</sup>

This comparison to the methods of natural science has both aided and harmed the historical endeavour in its quest to be recognised as a unique form of thought. Through its attempt to follow the methods laid down by the other sciences, a certain precision of method has evolved, but a fallacious conception depicting its events as inert occurrences which can be objectively recorded for posterity has also surfaced. The latter view has subsequently burdened it with the perception of the need for the provision of statistical data seeking to reinforce certain attempts at describing universal concepts which it is ill-equipped to ascertain. In reality, the historical past is still alive because it is being continually re formulated within the context of the perpetually emergent present. Its nature is fluid because the concepts of history are maintained by the thoughts and actions of its interpretations contained within the present. Within this methodology, a change of perspective, does not necessarily annul the validity of the former, as in the case of science, but actually secures its survival through its continual development and critical re-examination. The historian then, seeks to acquire knowledge concerning what the human mind has done in the past and this action of reconstruction and reinterpretation allows such events to have an impact on the present. Given this, the methodology of history must be seen as elucidating the status of the development of the human mind up to, and including, the surrounding circumstances of the most recent historical account.<sup>14</sup>

### *III. The Interpretation of Historical Events*

Surfacing within the comparison undertaken in the previous section between natural science and history, is the fact that the historical endeavour is a unique and specific technique of speculative investigation. This discipline has acquired its own specific type of influence on every segment of human thought, and subsequently, human action. It is not, as is generally assumed, a partial familiarity with the transient circumstances of the past, nor is it a partially reasoned knowledge of the abstract ideals of thought manifested in these past actions. It is a circumspect method of investigation which provides the knowledge to differentiate the elements within the human condition that are transient and those which are transcendent.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., Pg. 215.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., Pg. 229.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., Pg. 231.

Thus, the historical endeavour presents Mankind with a sequence of seemingly disparate individual events, but actually depicts the same fundamental element that emerges within the varying temporal junctures of the past. This essential constituent component is the human spirit.

It is this spirit which is revealed in the actions and events that serve as the material for the study of history. In discerning their significance, the historian becomes more than an investigator in the scientific sense, he becomes a kind of believer. This role is assumed because its investigation is reliant on the descriptions of circumstances, which are in the first instance, perceived by someone else. This fact would seem to imply that the historian is merely representing previously formulated accounts of past events and that the only avenue to historical truth is through the strident recapitulation of such chronicles. If this were the case, it would seem that the historical method could be completely *objective*, because the historian is merely recounting the evidence discovered within the context of its research. There are some grounds for this perception that Collingwood describes as the 'common-sense' theory of history, but such an illusive perception can be easily dismantled through an examination of the fundamental interaction between the historian and historical evidence.<sup>16</sup>

The basis for the argument against this view of history rests on the fact that the historian must alter the evidence of an event discovered during an investigation. There are several ways in which such alterations may take place. In the first, a transformation may emerge in the process of selection undertaken in the determination of the relevant material in regards to the focus of the investigation. In a majority of the cases, the extent of the evidence concerning a historical subject is vast, so a historian is forced to select certain pieces of information important in the constitution of the desired portrayal. This process of selection is akin to editing because the inclusion or exclusion of potential material has a profound effect on the historical conclusions stemming from it.

A second means stems directly from the first, in that certain conjectures are then formulated corresponding to the perceived implications of the chosen material. Hence, it is not only the selection of the material that is important to the foundation of the interpretation, but the conjectures that follow from this act. This process of selection and subsequent conjecture determines not only the content, but also the theories concerning its meaning. Finally, the criticism regarding such evidence is imperative, because a historian is often forced to reconcile problems or inconsistencies arising from the evidence gathered during an investigation. Such reconciliation is usually undertaken through speculation which seeks to draw theoretical

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., Pg. 232.



connections between the disparate or disjointed evidence discovered. With such steps, the historian is utilising a technique of interpretation which relies on selective, critical, and re-constructive processes that allows preceding accounts to be superseded by descriptions illustrating the historian's own autonomous thoughts.

As Nietzsche points out in his text exploring the concept of history, the impossibility of complete objectivity and detachment by the historian is similar to the circumstance confronting a painter attempting to recreate an accurate representation of a landscape.<sup>17</sup> In such an attempt, the artist must undertake an intense set of procedures including selection, simplification, and abstraction, which ultimately determine the intrinsic nature of this representation. Underlying the leap from the spatial reality of the world to the planar attributes of the canvas is the artist's imagination which transforms the canvas into a finished work of art. Similarly, the historian must also utilise the faculty of the imagination in an effort to discover the intrinsic characteristics of the past. He must sift through the wealth of information contained within the past, abstract it, and discern its implications on the present.

Consequently, the imagination of the historian is generally of two minds, one akin to the artist, while the other resembles that of the detective. In the case of the artistic imagination, this faculty must interpret the implications of the evidence presented and formulate them into a representation of the historical event. Coupled with this, is another procedure involving the creation of conjectures which connect disparate events in order to overcome the discontinuity and fragmentation of such evidence. Just as the scene of a crime will provide multiple clues pertaining to the true nature of the event, it frequently does so in a disparate and fragmented manner. Thus, a detective must piece together an imaginative reconstruction by speculating upon the reason and sequence of events leading to the execution of the crime. Likewise, the historian constructs a similar paradigm from the evidence discovered which is evaluated in an attempt to produce an accurate reconstruction. This theoretical paradigm must then be justified by factual evidence and serves as a guide for the examination of this data.

Given these similarities, it becomes evident that the historian's methodology is akin to the artist's as well as the detective's, because it is ultimately a product of the imagination. The existence of this interpretative component of the historical process dispels the common-sense notion of a detached and completely objective description of the past. In reality, the ultimate justification for the sources and facts presented as evidence is that they were selected as sources (i.e. they contained an importance to the historian). It is largely due this prevalent perception, that highly prejudiced depictions can emerge that rest their interpretations on

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<sup>17</sup>Friedrich Nietzsche, Pg. 52-53.

misinformation or are cynical attempts to manipulate the perceptions of the mass public. The only guard against such occurrences, (and it is only a partial one at best) is a critical and varied examination of the past. Every historian must attempt to judge the evidence as thoroughly and objectively as possible in an effort to discover any discrepancies or falsifications. If a historical account rests on valid interpretations and evidence, it will withstand renewed critical examination. For it is the same faculty of the imagination which constructs such events that can simultaneously provide the material for its critical examination and thus, contribute to the maintenance of its presence within the identity of the community.<sup>18</sup>

#### *IV. The Meaning of History*

Given that this endeavour relies heavily on the activity of subjective interpretation, does this not call into question the possibility of history instilling any real meaning to Man's existence? If it is intrinsically comprised of a series of imaginative reconstructions of past events where the values, ideals, and personal prejudices of the historian can influence its formulation, how then, can such accounts indicate the potential meaning of the circumstances confronting the present generation? In reply to these and other questions related to this subject, the historical endeavour seems to contain an intrinsic value to the human condition, but not in the form of the provision of a singular meaning.

Due to the factor of interpretation that is involved, no singular meaning to history can be ascertained, only a multitude of interpretations which supply various degrees of meaning relating to the context surrounding each account. This is brought about because within this endeavour it is impossible to avoid undertaking a specific 'point of view'. However, these differing perspectives may not necessarily be incompatible. This factor of multiple perspectives equates to the way in which different artists may discover varying attributes of the same object. Though their depictions may focus on different aspects, a consistent characteristic arising within all their representations is the spirit or essence of the subject-matter. This aspect may be portrayed in many ways, but in essence it is always the same, though each artist will derive a 'meaning' from that spirit which is unique to their individual perception and situation. Therefore, each of the interpretations will contain a piece of the artist that created them. Each of these attributes are unique to a representation, but this does not lessen their relevance or the validity of their insight.

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<sup>18</sup>Collingwood, Pg. 245.

Accordingly, given that each successive generation inherits or produces its own set of problems inclusive to its own interests, values, or objectives, it must be allowed the flexibility to interpret history in correlation with its perspective. Such freedom is admissible as long as an interpretation attempts to maintain a certain continuity with previous generations. In this way, each succeeding generation has the opportunity to assert its own meaning into the temporal continuum of history that relates to its priorities and circumstances.<sup>19</sup> However, this is not meant to insinuate that *all* interpretations are of equal merit, for historical depictions which contain inconsistencies or have overlooked certain poignant facts must inevitably be considered less valid than more thorough investigations. Nevertheless, the main concern involving meaning within the historical perspective is to be aware of its subjective nature and to be as critical as possible in order to avoid succumbing to prejudiced or tainted interpretations.

Consequently, there can never be a re creation of the past that is absolutely accurate in every detail to the original event, thus, all history is based on the *interpretation* of the evidence surrounding such an event. Given that a single interpretation can never be the final authority on the ramifications of a historical event, each successive generation must produce its own interpretation from the evidence provided through its own investigation and those of previous ages.<sup>20</sup> It doesn't matter how fragmented or faulted many of the individual accounts may be in isolation, for together they form a general continuum, where the spirit that history seeks to reveal, perpetually exists. It is here, within the unfolding temporal sequence of this continuum that the varying interpretations of each generation are drawn, and in a reciprocal action, they further enrich its content by bestowing upon it their meaning that correlates to their respective points of view.

### ***The Potential of The Historical Perspective.***

From the foundations uncovered previously concerning the essential characteristics of history, the importance of it's influence on the formation of the identities of both the individual and the community now becomes clearer. The notion of history is important to both the individual and society in two primary ways. Firstly, it illustrates the importance of an individual's connection to other individuals through the provision of necessary insights into the

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<sup>19</sup>Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies: Hegel and Marx*. Vol. II. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1945) Pg. 268.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

potential consequences of one's actions within the social sphere. It informs one in regards to the struggle which has taken place, both from within and without, in the formation of a culture. Secondly, it provides valuable information, that is intrinsically important to the perseverance of a culture, and forms the basis for the creation of meaning concerning the suffering endemic to human existence.<sup>21</sup> Thus, because of its ability to provide a society and its members a measure of understanding in regards to questions involving the fundamental characteristics of existence, the study of the past retains a central role in defining the fundamental characteristics of Being within the present.

Similarly, the historical perspective can also be a party to the production of negative effects as well. An excess of history can stifle the innate creativity of individual members of a society by burdening their lives with the weight of a historical mythology that causes stagnation instead of serving as an impetus towards action. When such a situation arises, its traditions become so entrenched that social change and individual expression are impossible, causing apathy and complacency to beset a society. Such dominant customs can also be manipulated to produce an environment more conducive to the intentions of a governing power. Through the corruption of this perspective, it is possible to lay the foundations of influence facilitating the acceptance of its measures and the overt oppression of those individuals who may be inclined to speak out against such actions. In this way, tradition and history become an apparatus of control or seduction instead of the provider of enriching insights.

It is this aptitude for utilisation in regards to the mobilisation of the differing factions of a society which connects history to the social forces influenced by power and utopia. The exploitation of the historical perspective to gain influence over these varied groups can set the foundation for the acceptance and implementation of certain social and political proposals. It is through such historical imagery that bonds between groups or individuals are forged as well as the divisions which also beset a society. Such imagery can be so effective that the ties formed are so strong that individuals will readily sacrifice themselves, or undertake acts of violence or oppression towards their perpetuation. For it is this imagery which lays the foundation for many of the events, both negative and positive, that can emerge within a given social and political context.

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<sup>21</sup>Nietzsche, Pg. 16.

## *I. The Utility of History*

The historical consciousness can influence in a profoundly positive manner, the social imagination that underlies the formation and perpetuation of the cultural identity. It is a primary factor in forging the psychological attachment which allows unfamiliar individuals to act in unison towards the achievement of the common goals necessary for the existence of a community. The communal spirit evoked by this potent sense of belonging can become more powerful with each passing generation, as its historical imagery becomes more defined and accepted. Accordingly, such a spirit is one of the major influences surrounding the formation and maintenance of the social structures that reciprocate by reinforcing this cultural unity in an effort to create a national identity. The feeling of empowerment which stems from this unity that underlies most nationalist tendencies bestows such a strong sense of association, many individuals will readily sacrifice themselves to assure the perpetuation of the symbols and structures that provide a sense of meaning to their existence. These powerful feelings can inevitably bring about certain positive effects to the life of the community if channelled in a positive manner. Therefore, the imagery of the historical perspective can influence a society in several ways in regards to the instigation of actions that will greatly benefit its inhabitants.

One central role of influence that history can have on a society stems from its provision of references and examples of past actions or deeds which serves to inform the present generation as to the intrinsic nature of human possibility. It is through the continual demarcation of Mankind's progress, that this perspective accentuates its potential. Such examples of achievement may not be found amongst the activities comprising the present generation, so certain individuals must rely on the past for indications of what is possible within the present. In this way, history serves as the fundamental ground for the accumulation of the knowledge and courage needed to undertake and implement certain social and political changes. In this role of mentor, history can indicate the direction and actions needed to conquer the stagnant attitudes that may inhabit a social context.<sup>22</sup> The courage needed to overcome the adversity to change that is often directed towards certain dynamic proposals can be attained by a reference to the past. History can be a useful acolyte in such circumstances through its provision of examples where similar problems surfaced and changes were successfully made to alleviate them.

From the perspective gained through the study of the past, a foundation can be laid within the present that can stress the necessity of creative action. For a culture to remain vigorous

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., Pg. 17.



and healthy, it is imperative that it perpetually redefines the social structures formulating its identity in an effort to avoid social stagnation. History can serve as a lesson regarding this important characteristic by providing cultural archetypes that can serve as ideals in reference to past examples of successful cultures in ascension. Returning to the earlier analogy involving the activities of the artist, the intention behind the painting is not to recreate the landscape in exact detail, for that is an impossible as well as an undesirable feat, but to create a renewed interpretation capturing the essential spirit in terms of the artist's individual perception of it. The panorama set before the artist serves only as a guide or example. It is the imagination that creates a fresh interpretation which expresses the attributes of the landscape in relation to the inner creative impulses of the artist. History contains the potential to provide a very similar influence.

Through this analogy, the intrinsic value of history becomes manifest; for its most positive attribute is its ability to reveal to Man the multitude of variations in the form of the manifest spirit of the World's temporal movement. These variations are the attributes which bestow upon both the World and Man's existence within it, its beauty, depth, and endless divergence. Each facet of this existence, past and present, contains the appearance of chance due to the containment of the multitude of singular tendencies which seems disjointed, but it is the historical endeavour which can divulge the thread of continuity that underlies its vast array of individual possibilities. It contains the ability to inform humanity of the essential nature of the highest and most noble ideals that are the foundation of a society. If the imagery of history is utilised in this manner, as a *guide* to bringing about the most admirable characteristics of Man's potential, it can serve to inspire him to a creative existence. Such a condition of perpetual individual creativity is an imperative trait to the formulation of an 'open' and diverse society.

History then, can highlight the potential of men, and is a necessary ally to the utopian spirit in its struggle against the emergence of the possible cynical and repressive nature of power. Because of this, it can be of great benefit to the health and stability of a society. However, given the intrinsic connection that history has to these forces, it contains a rather more sinister potential as well, which can counteract the cultivation of this creative spirit within a community. Such potentiality doesn't enrich the lives of the individual members of a society, but seeks only to control and oppress them.

## *II. Excess & Cynicism Within The Historical Perspective.*

Though the historical endeavour contains the capacity to illustrate some of Man's noblest possibilities, an excess of history can also become one of the greatest adversaries of this creative spirit. There are several ways for such adversity to arise. In the first instance, an excess of history can produce a 'flattening' of the historical perspective by bestowing a significance on everything that occurred within the temporal horizon of the past. This act tends to imbue a certain historical weariness amongst the individuals of the present generation by ignoring the role which ideals and values of the present must play in the definition of historically important events.<sup>23</sup> If all aspects of the past are considered equally venerable solely on the basis of temporal location, everything contained within the context of the present that differs from this overwhelming presence, will be ostracised as a form of degeneracy.

If too much importance is placed upon tradition and its maintenance, the creative spirit that underlies the desire for the 'new' can be repressed to near extinction. The history of a culture no longer provides the foundation for the embarkation of creative endeavours seeking new interpretations of human existence, but desires only to preserve the past in an unnatural manner. The present is thus corrupted, forcing a society to live outside of its time, not towards the dawning of the future horizon, but towards a morbid recreation of the past. Within this circumstance, a society attempts to artificially adapt to a mentality that doesn't comprehend how to exist creatively, but only seeks to understand how to preserve Man's existence artificially.<sup>24</sup>

A second risk involving history's influence is its potential misappropriation of past images in order to perpetuate the belief that the present is merely the last stages of a civilisation that has spent much of its vitality, and is corrupted. Such a perception breeds a dangerous irony and heralds a cynicism that undermines the potential of the human spirit. With the emergence of this characteristic, all aspects of existence are beset with the oppressive perception of an intrinsic emptiness. Life becomes a laboured activity focused on mere survival. The capacity to pose the question of 'what if' disappears as the impetus for creative action melts away. A generation burdened with this trait becomes increasingly comprised of creatures of mere habit, clinging to what is familiar, while foregoing the search for anything new.

If such an age is allowed to progress in this manner for an extended period of time, a subsequent danger emerges involving a rapid reversal of attitude that can breed a fanaticism

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., Pg. 26.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

which ignores the present reality altogether. Such romanticism can instigate a pilfering of history that seeks reckless transformations of the present social structure and habitually underlies the opportunistic actions of persons seeking to gain a dominate position within a society. With such a context, the propaganda campaign produced to evoke certain emotional responses may edit out substantial portions of history in order to create a sterilised view of the past that elevates a few heroic examples to a mythical status. With such activities, the actual events of the past become indistinguishable from a culture's mythology. History becomes mere analogy, utilised as propaganda to transform an emotionally-charged cultural enthusiasm into a formidable fanaticism.<sup>25</sup>

The danger here is immense, for if this fanaticism is focused by an individual or party with hostile intentions, existing power structures can be overthrown or seriously de-stabilised. (See chapter 5) With this fictionalisation, a radical political party may attempt to instigate social unrest or justify violent acts of terrorism under a campaign to re enact the events of a mythical past. Such examples indicate the possible outcome if the historical perspective is purposely distorted to manipulate the mass psyche of a culture. With such a procedure, entire segments of a society can be mobilised to carry out certain social actions under its false idealisations. If the group facilitating this manipulation has less than noble intentions, the effects on a society are likely to be catastrophic.

It is this possible connection between the notion of history and the apparatus of propaganda which underlines its importance to the structure of a society. This correlation allows history's utilisation by political groups to unify and mobilise the various factions of a society. Often, these parties seek to utilise history as a resource legitimising the ideology underlying their aspirations. Without this legitimacy, mobilising the support needed to embark on any change in a social structure would prove difficult. The usage of the historical perspective as a resource by a propaganda campaign is of primary importance to any social movement, regardless of the political intentions underlying its actions. To uncover how various individuals or parties can mobilise generally diverse and disparate social groups to endeavour upon singular or unified objectives, it is imperative to analyse the true nature of propaganda as well as its utilisation of the historical perspective or visionary images in its endeavour to gain influence and control. Hence, it is towards the analysis of this apparatus that the focus of our study will now turn.

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., Pg. 20.

### ***The Nature and Methodology of Propaganda***

As was the case concerning the popular perception of the historical endeavour, there are many mistaken assumptions about the nature, method, and meaning, surrounding the concept of propaganda. Generally, it is the high emotional content to this idea that evokes and exaggerates many of the mistaken perceptions surrounding its use. Much of its reputation also stems from the central role that it has played in many of the darker episodes within the twentieth century and its encroachment upon almost every aspect of modern life. It is due to these facts that propaganda has come to be conceived as the personification of an ever more oppressive media assault on modern society. Consequently, its methods are usually associated with evil, deception, and control. Some, though not all, of these perceptions are well founded because its methods have definitely been a party to the occurrence of such events in the past. However, careful scrutiny, shows that propaganda is a procedural device that contains no intrinsically negative characteristics in itself. This is not to assert that propaganda cannot bring about social actions with questionable moral implications, but it is not the procedure itself which should be judged, it is the intentions behind its usage which should be scrutinised.

This factor will serve as the primary crux of the discussion concerning its characteristics because until certain mistaken assumptions are overcome, many misconceptions will be sustained, thus obscuring the true measurement of its effects. These mistaken perceptions could also hinder the discovery of the parameters involved in its interaction with the social attributes of power, utopia, and history, as well as its efforts to acquire and maintain influence over the perceptions, values, and attitudes of the individuals comprising a society. Given this, propaganda could be accurately described as the overt orchestration of all of these social tendencies in the endeavour to manipulate public opinion. Due to its being an extension of such forces, the use of propaganda can incur similar paradoxical connotations to those uncovered previously within the relationship of power and utopia.

Thus in order to clarify the essential characteristics of propaganda, its relationship to the historical perspective, and to the notions of power and utopia, it is necessary to dispel some of the negative connotations of the term. Similarly, it is also necessary to establish the fact that where public opinion is concerned, some form of propaganda is being applied.<sup>26</sup> It is utilised within the discourse of all political systems to illustrate the policies of the parties involved in an attempt to build support for the implementation of their visions. Its importance has increased phenomenally in the modern age, because of the advent of mass media which

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<sup>26</sup>David Welch, *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda*. (London: Routledge, 1993) Pg. 5.

provides unlimited avenues of influence to the public at large. Coupled with this, is the fact that societies are becoming so complex and extensive that in-depth discussion on such a large scale is impossible. This condition is one of the primary reasons that propaganda has become the apparatus of choice for modern political factions.

Thus, in the formation of social structures based on clear ideological visions, or the undertaking of political action, propaganda is not a temporary divergence, but plays an essential role. Its capacity to provide an influential imagery can transform public opinion and places it in a central position of importance within this realm as social groups seek continually to mobilise support on various issues. Within modern politics, the art of persuasion has become one of the single-most important factors instigating any faction's rise to power. Given this, in undertaking any political action, the ability to control public opinion is an absolute necessity and it is this ability that links the use of propaganda as a tool to convey the imagery produced by the contingencies of power and utopia. To clearly ascertain the potential of propaganda is to go some way in uncovering how the values and ideals of a society inform and motivate the social praxis undertaken within it.

### *I. The Definition of Propaganda*

It is imperative to begin this exploration by questioning certain traditionally prevalent assumptions about propaganda. Concerning this, several questions must be addressed: What is propaganda? How does it affect the perceptions of individuals within a society? And, can such effects be overcome or avoided? In answering these questions, Mankind's perception of, and interaction with, certain components of its surrounding social reality must be examined to discover where its foundations lie.

When humans interact with their surrounding reality, a collection of stereotypical images are built up within the consciousness through its continual interaction with the psyche. Due to the sheer complexity of the elements and events experienced, the mind must break up the continuous whole of reality into significant parts which are then categorised in accordance to an individual's immediate desires, intentions, and actions. In other words, the human mind must undertake a process of abstraction and simplification of its external surroundings in order to survive. Consequently, with such a method, there is always a danger of oversimplification which undermines the reliability of the decisions made based on its framework of abstraction.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Balfour, Pg. 419. The author describes this danger with the statement; "This process of abstraction, though essential, calls for the omission of the features not selected as significant, so that it is also a process of simplification. There is a great temptation to oversimplify. . . Yet reality is complex, so that



Such flawed information can then inform the intentions of an agent, which may subsequently enter into certain actions attempting to transform the complex set of conditions comprising the external reality, which can lead to damaging miscalculations.

The potential for objectivity within this process of interpretation becomes further removed by the presence of latent values, ideals, desires, and fears within the individuals constituting the social structures of civilisation. Such expectations create preconceptions about reality which further clouds an individual's judgement through the perpetuation of an assumption that one interpretation of reality supersedes another. Such implicit assumptions influence people to the point that they are inclined to accept only interpretations of reality that are consistent with their values and experiences. The inherent danger of relying on such simplified associations is that their underlying presuppositions are based on emotions rather than the extensive scrutiny of facts revealed through a process of critical thought.

However, such perceptions cannot be jettisoned easily, for they constitute an individual's essential nature and are formulated through a life-long process of exposure to personal interactions, historical interpretations, and the media. This constant bombardment can leave the human faculty of reason with a proclivity towards the influence of the emotions and unleashes two incompatible tendencies inherent to its nature.<sup>28</sup> The first, desires an objective view of reality through a process of critical examination and seeks to reduce the subjective distortion between reality and its sensual perceptions. The second, seeks the opposite, and desires the control and limitation of such discourse in order to justify the acceptance of an interpretation based on emotion rather than actual evidence. The former, is the basis for the methodology of science and other human endeavours seeking an objective knowledge, while the latter is the foundation for the practice of producing propaganda in an effort to facilitate some predetermined end. Within the context of this distinction then, propaganda may be defined as the inducement to action through the limitation of access to evidence that would allow a more informed and rationally-based decision. It is therefore, a choice based on an emotional response, instead of a measured decision based on a thorough examination of *all* evidence available.

The differences between these two tendencies are not as pronounced as they first appear, and it is largely due to this that propaganda is so effective. The primary object of the propagandist is to persuade individuals to endeavour towards certain actions. To achieve this,

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the more simplified any system is, the less close the relationship which it is likely to bear to the external world and therefore the more unreliable as a basis for action intended to change in a particular direction. That is why the historian Burckhardt warned us to be on our guard against *simplificateurs terribles*."

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., Pg. 421.

the arguments advocating such action must appear to be both rational and in relation to the experiences of those it seeks to motivate. To this end, a skilled propagandist will strive to camouflage these persuasive techniques as objective arguments. Astute practitioners have the ability to project the illusion of advocating a position that can deflect spontaneous objections on rational grounds, whilst implicitly pandering to the emotional prejudices of the audience. Granted, within any argument there is a certain amount of propaganda involved, but this is generally due to an enthusiasm for certain attributes, thus leading to attempts to emphasise certain positive aspects while playing down negative ones. These actions and those undertaken by the propagandist are profoundly different in both intention and degree. The practitioner of the objective argument is not usually consciously bombarding a selected audience with an emotive language whose underlying ambition is to provoke an emotional instead of intellectual response.<sup>29</sup>

Generally, propaganda is utilised to incite intense feelings within a group of individuals. By creating an atmosphere where they think that rational decisions are being made, they are duped into making emotional decisions based on purposeful distortions with a specific outcome in mind. Thus, in a way, propaganda evokes a blind leap of faith, because its theories rest on a limited and focused perspective. Its potential rests on a tenuous connection to the true nature of reality, because the likelihood of the materialisation of its projections is measured on the assumption that events within the future can be deduced from the outcome of events in the past. Therefore, the expectations stimulated by such a discourse can enslave both those who practice and those influenced by its methodology.

Consequently, the fortunes of many prominent figures or parties depends on the successful manifestation of their proposals for the future within the immediate context of the present. This is due to the fact that their competency is measured by the outcome of the implementation of their policies. Such results either validate or undermine their interpretations and predictions concerning the future. Many political figures or groups will utilise the mechanics of propaganda in an attempt to persuade a large enough number of individuals that their policies are valid and in so doing influence them to act on these proposals which can then transform the character of that future.<sup>30</sup> Such actions can be successful if the proposals are feasible, both in the extent of the changes proposed and the temporal span needed to implement them. It is here that propaganda's connection to the dynamic forces underling power and utopia becomes most apparent, for they both seek to instigate changes that will affect the parameters of the future.

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., Pg. 422.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., Pg. 424.

The irony involved in the use of propaganda, however, is that for such decisions to successfully influence the parameters of the future in a positive way, they must be based on an objective and rational examination of the facts, not the emotional impulses provoked by the machinations of a propaganda campaign.

These factors begin to indicate the integral part that the art of persuasion plays in any political machine and the numerous ways it can engage the feelings and perceptions of individuals in order to dominate their actions. It habitually seeks to evoke these desired actions within the context of the present by employing the emotive imagery connected to both the past and future. Propaganda generally favours working within these temporal horizons because the full extent of its claims within these contexts cannot be verified empirically. Therefore, propaganda is intrinsically a methodology which seeks to manipulate the prejudices, values, and perceptions of individuals provoking them into undertaking social actions corresponding to the political intentions of the group utilising its procedures. In modern societies, its potential is immense, for a governing structure can be created or destroyed through the explicit success or failure of its propaganda.

If a campaign can successfully engage the dreams or fears of a majority of the individuals within a society, it can mobilise support to suppress opposition, raise armies, or instigate revolutions. It undertakes such endeavours based on information that doesn't describe the true implications of actual events, but only the manipulated perceptions of them. Thus, its ultimate aim is to establish control through the orchestration of the perceptions that inform individuals of the nature of their reality. Images involving the past and future are especially useful to its machinations, because they intrinsically involve a certain attribute of faith in the validity of the assertions specifying their conditions. Such faith, in the wrong hands, is an immense danger to all involved. Consequently, the device of propaganda is an integral part of the formation and functioning of any society, as well as the instrument which can ultimately spell its destruction.

## *II. Prevailing Misconceptions Concerning The Methodology of Propaganda*

To this point, our study has established that the use of propaganda is aimed at affecting the emotions rather than the intellect, and by its very nature seeks to manipulate our perception of reality. However, there are several misconceptions which must be dispelled before its full implications can be laid bare.<sup>31</sup> The first, rests on the conception that the device of propaganda is a persuasive technique which has the ability to completely transform the values

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<sup>31</sup>Welch, Pg. 5-6.

or beliefs of those exposed to its discourse. In reality, it does not create or change existing beliefs, but attempts to reinforce or accentuate them. Any form of psychological manipulation, mass or individual, does not have the ability to completely transform a mind through the insertion of a set of totally foreign ideas, but works primarily through the power of suggestion. In other words, it must manipulate the psyche of the individuals constituting a society by appealing to the existing prejudices, desires, and fears, implicitly reinforced within the institutions and structures of a society. As Aldous Huxely observed:

"Propaganda gives force and direction to the successive movements of popular feeling and desire; but it does not do much to create these movements. The propagandist is a man who canalises an already existing stream. In a land where there is no water, he digs in vain."<sup>32</sup>

Given this, for a regime to increase its influence or to maintain a hold on power, its policies must appear to coincide with the experience and perceptions of the individuals it seeks to influence. If the discourse expounded by a group is contrary to the desires, moral convictions, or historical perceptions of the members of a society, its success in influencing individuals to undertake certain actions will be extremely limited. As is the case involving the conceptions of ideal societies, successful propaganda cannot be conceived in a vacuum.

A second misconception rests on the mistaken insight that all propaganda is the falsification of the facts, with no relation to the truth.<sup>33</sup> Actually, it utilises many variations of the truth ranging from the complete fabrication of facts, or the semi-distortion of their potential implications, to their presentation void of any relation to their original context. The perception that propaganda is a form of deception is correct in its basic premise because it seeks to distort the truth in order to provoke a certain belief, but it normally retains some connection to it. Such a connection stems from the fact that though the emotive imagery of propaganda seeks to appeal to the irrational and emotional side of human nature, it must make a gesture to the rational side as well. Because within this nature, emotions are based in part on rational perceptions, therefore propaganda must appeal, at least partially, to rational decision-making process.

*In propaganda as in love, anything is permissible which is successful - (Joseph Goebbels)*<sup>34</sup>  
Within this statement, many of the moral indictments endemic to the prevailing misconceptions

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<sup>32</sup>Aldous Huxely, "Notes on Propaganda" in *Harper's Magazine*. (No. 174, December, 1936) Pg.

39. *Op. Cit.*: Welch, Pg. 9.

<sup>33</sup>Welch, Pg. 9.

<sup>34</sup>Quoted in Welch, Pg. 17.

surrounding the crucial characteristics of propaganda can be exposed. Propaganda, in and of itself, is fundamentally neutral in the ethical sense because it has the ability to produce both positive and negative effects. Therefore, its moral evaluation must be focused on the intentions behind its use and the consequences that are brought about as a result. Propaganda is merely a device for persuading individuals to act in a certain manner that may bring about a preconceived end result. Consequently, it must be considered morally neutral in much the same manner as a gun involved in an act of violence. The gun is not intrinsically immoral for it is only an apparatus which contains the capacity to carry out a morally repugnant action. It is the intention behind its use which must be held up to the scrutiny of a moral code of a specific society, not the device. In all social and political causes, both good and bad, propaganda plays an intrinsic role. It is intrinsically an apparatus that embodies an intention, and it is this, coupled with the consequences of its use which should be morally evaluated. As for the notion of propaganda itself, the moral responsibility lies with the operator and not the device.

### *III. Power, Utopia, History, and Propaganda*

From the preceding sections outlining the intrinsic nature and characteristics of the historical perspective and propaganda, a discussion on the connotations and methods of their utilisation by the social forces of power and utopia can now ensue. Since propaganda must rely on the prevailing perceptions of a culture to be fully effective in its objectives, its slogans must coincide with the predominant historical interpretations at the time. If, as asserted earlier, a culture attains a large part of its identity from its historical self-portraits, then seemingly the most fertile ground for material effective in the transformation of the communal psyche will be found in its history. In other words, to apprehend the history of a culture, is to understand a large part of its intrinsic mentality and the foundations of its self-identity. If this identity can be manipulated by creatively elaborating upon the events of history, then it is possible to orchestrate the perceptions of the public and increase the possibility that the objectives of the political group will become manifest. As a result, at an essential level, the apprehension and connection to the historical consciousness is what a propaganda campaign seeks to achieve.

Our primary question now becomes in what manner do the forces underlying power and utopia seek to utilise this latent historical identity, to produce propaganda that has the capacity to mobilise support for their proposed social actions. In attempting this, the methodologies



utilised by each of these societal tendencies are similar, but their respective objectives are noticeably different. In preceding chapters, the intrinsic characteristics of power and utopia were explored to uncover their fundamental linkage to a dual tendency found within human nature. As was discovered within this context, one tendency is oriented to the promotion of creative change, while the other strives to control its surroundings.

The former, is the manifest utopian element within a society and habitually utilises the device of propaganda to illustrate its visions in an effort to instigate action towards materialising its social reforms. It may draw on certain emotionally-charged historical perceptions that depict problems endemic to a culture by projecting images describing the alternative future that might solve them if certain changes were to proceed. Similarly, the utopian imagination might seek to contrast its proposals with the prevalent historical conception, either to re-instate values and conditions lost to a culture or break the hold of burdensome traditions stifling innovation. Its propaganda generally seeks to provide a depiction of a better existence within the future horizon and strives to gather support for changes to existing social and political structures that will remedy existing situations through the provision of alternative conditions. However, the possibility remains, that its intentions may be misconstrued, producing the opposite effects foreseen by their author or serve as a disguise for the cynical actions of a group attempting to seize or maintain control.

The latter, is intrinsically associated with the notion of power and the machinations corresponding to its attributes. Such characteristics also utilise the perspectives and mythology provided by history to accumulate support for the mobilisation of its intentions. Since the emphasis within this tendency is domination, the propaganda of power seeks to manipulate the fears of a society to reinforce the *status quo* of the existing power structure. Foreign threats, or the emergence of a cycle of moral and economic degeneration, are utilised as examples of the conditions arising if the existing division of power is questioned or weakened. In this way, the inhabitants of a society will support those in power, fearing the insecurity encountered at the thought of the unknown. To maintain a sense of security, many individuals will endure great hardships, for the future can produce a greater fear than the known repressive circumstances of the present.<sup>35</sup> The propaganda of power seeks to accentuate this fear of

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<sup>35</sup>Aldous Huxely, *Ends and Means: An Enquiry into The Nature and into The Methods Employed For Their Realisation*. (Edinburgh: Readers Union and Chatto & Windus, 1938) Pg. 56. Huxely makes an insightful observation pertaining to this point in his statement; "The patience of common humanity is the most important, and almost the most surprising fact in history. Most men and women are prepared to tolerate the intolerable. Their reasons are many and various; there is ignorance, first of all those who know no state of affairs other than the intolerable, are unaware that their lot might be improved. Then

change, because it is the emergence and perpetuation of such an emotion that enables the maintenance of its control.

Also, this negative propaganda often strives to evoke a sense of unity and allegiance through the creation of fear pertaining to a certain segment of society or a foreign power. By fuelling such anxiety, a regime will seek to deflect criticism against its own policies by focusing the brunt of the frustration of a society towards certain social or ethnic groups. Various factions are encouraged to rally behind the government to eliminate these perceived threats. Concurrently, the propagation of an external threat is still more effective for such a unification because it combines innate prejudices with the fear of the unknown to produce a potent imagery of hatred and distrust. This atmosphere can transform the entire power structure of a society through intimidation and fear, allowing the governing power to control all aspects of the lives of its electorate in the name of their defence.

All of the methods mentioned above are effective in terms of mobilising the support of disparate perceptions or interests and are therefore potential components within any social formation. However, propaganda is not, as it is often asserted, a modern malaise caused by the spread of the mass media. Its methods have always been utilised in one form or another within the civilisations of Man throughout much of humanity's history. Mass media has strengthened such measures and made them more potent because it can reach an extensive audience, but its techniques were not invented within the modern era. This wider coverage does make this technique potentially more dangerous, for it provides access to a public opinion more susceptible to being swayed by the distortion of facts.

Consequently, it is the scale of its use within this era which has brought the methodology of propaganda to the forefront. Also, it is because of this expansion that the idealisations produced by the utopian imagination have a greater potential of influence and actual materialisation than ever before. Similarly, those in power who have acknowledged its potential in the past are utilising it with greater efficiency than ever before. Thus far, its attributes have been analysed and cited in an abstract manner in an effort to establish its connection to the historical consciousness, power, and the utopian impulse. However, to uncover the full implications of these connections, it must be analysed within the context of an actual society. For such a context, a telling example of the potential of an orchestrated propaganda campaign in transforming a society is found in the programs enacted by the National Socialists in their radical transformation of the social structures of German society.

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there is fear. Men know that their life is intolerable, but are afraid of the consequence of revolt. Mere habit and the force of inertia are also extremely powerful."

### ***Nazi Germany: A Case Study in The Manipulation of The Historical Consciousness***

To look to an event within the world's history where the utilisation and manipulation of the historical consciousness was extremely effective in mobilising a large portion of the population towards the support of a specific ideology, one has to look no further than the twentieth century during the Nazi party's rise to power in Germany. During their twelve year reign, the structure of German society was transformed substantially in a number of ways, with the ultimate outcome of this campaign being catastrophic for both the German nation and the world as a whole. This event also serves to exemplify how the creation of a utopian discourse founded on a historical mythology can be utilised by a repressive and violent regime attain power by deflecting attention from its true intentions and actions.<sup>36</sup>

Such an event reinforces the assertion that groups seeking influence to instigate changes or to maintain control can utilise such measures in the manifestation of their intentions. The events of this period also underline the importance of the relationship between a societies' perception of history, its propaganda, and its political machinations. It becomes clear within this context that to disregard or ignore such imagery is to be placed in the dangerous position of inadvertently becoming a party to its intentions. It is important then, to understand how these social and political tendencies can gain a position of influence, if only to establish a vigilance against the malevolent effects that may emerge if they are left unchecked.

Within the prevalent propaganda of Germany at the time, there were elements which were utopian combined with characteristics common to the machinations of a repressive power structure that contributed directly to the image of the party. The values, desires, and prejudices of the German masses were manipulated through the utilisation of a utopian-like mythology of tradition reinforced by a methodical use of terror and violence. The genius behind such a campaign was its ability to adapt its propaganda machine to appeal to varied groups and classes of individuals throughout the whole of the society. Through the usage of this methodology, the party sought to replace the political system of the Wiemar Republic and

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<sup>36</sup>Hermann Rauschning, *Germany's Revolution of Destruction*. trans. E. W. Dickes. (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1939) Pg. 27. As the author observed at the time of the Third Reich's rise to power in the 1930's; "He (Hitler) succeeded in a concealment of the true facts on a scale never before known. Under its disguise it succeeded in foisting on the country, in place of an authoritarian State, an instrument of dominance that serves simply and purely for the maintenance of its own absolute power. Under the mask of a movement of national liberation, it achieved the despotic repression of the nation, with the voluntary assistance of the middle classes and large sections of the working class.

its traditional class barriers with an image of a unified, structureless nation, both in the economic and political sense.<sup>37</sup>

Though the outcome of such manoeuvring was to ultimately destroy the social structure of the German state at the time, such events were not due solely to the images projected by its suggestive campaigns, but also rested on the intentions or motives behind these projections. Similar methods were being utilised by Hitler's counterpart in America, Roosevelt, to embark on a more peaceful endeavour by engaging the mass media in an effort to overcome the economic hardships brought on by the great depression.<sup>38</sup> His 'new deal' slogans, employment of artists to depict a positive image of its programs, and the "fireside chats", were instrumental in his attempts to restart the economy through the restoration of confidence in the 'American dream'. These actions were in striking contrast to those undertaken by the Nazi party in its attempts to prepare the German people for war. Their differing intentions which spawned markedly divergent actions in the same era, provides a historical example of the inherent potential of the interaction between the historical conscious, the utopian imagination, and the quest for power, in both the negative and positive sense. When abused it can, as in the case of Germany, leave a society in ruins, or if utilised with positive intentions overcome great hardships to reach prosperity.

The case of Germany is also interesting within the context of this study because the perception of its rise to power was seen as more than a change of government. Its supporters perceived this event as the installation of an ideology that would radically transform the social and political conditions of the German society to bring about a classless system based on the concept of a national unity. Such objectives were not in themselves morally reprehensible and may actually have benefited the society, but it was the violent and repressive techniques utilised for the undertaking of this transformation that lead to the atrocities committed. It was these acts of violence that were an indication of the cynical and purposeful disjunction between the 'image' of the party's intentions and their true nature. As Rauschning described at the time of the Nazi's ascent to power; "The doctrine is meant for the masses. It is *not* a part of the real motive forces of the revolution. It is an instrument for the control of the masses. The elite, the leaders, stand above the doctrine. They make use of it in furtherance of their purposes."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Welch. Pg. 16.

<sup>38</sup>Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*. (New York: Verso, 1989) Pg. 54. "Thus, while Roosevelt's New Deal America was using radio and film to regulate the 'war of the home market' and to restart the industrial production machine, Hitler was directing millions of unemployed Germans to relaunch war as an epic."

<sup>39</sup>Rauschning, Pg. 20.

In the achievement of these objectives, there were several primary elements important to the method used by the Nazis in seizing control of the German State.<sup>40</sup> The first consisted of the utilisation of the pre-existing state apparatus to gain a legitimised control over the civil service and the military. Secondly, there was a widespread terror campaign in which the property of individuals or groups opposing the regime was confiscated and their persons violently abused during the lawless state accompanying its rapid rise to power. After such measures were carried out, raising support for the opposition of party policies was hindered thoroughly, if not rendered completely impossible. Finally, such violence was offset by the positive images produced by its propaganda which utilised the available media technology with alarming success. The image of a German renaissance had a huge impact on a nation which was burdened by economic hardship, mass unemployment, and a deep-seeded sense of national humiliation caused by the outcome of the first World War. Thus, its appeal ran much deeper than the contemporary circumstances, for it reached the traditional intellectual tendencies that had been cultivated and reinforced by the existing Prussian State's inclination towards romanticism.<sup>41</sup>

It was these factors which provided the fundamental ground for the major themes of the Nazi propaganda campaign that became immensely successful in appealing to the emotions of the German people. The major themes produced by this state apparatus to achieve this social mobilisation was founded on three simultaneous campaigns; the idea of the national community, the doctrine of racial purity, and the cult of the *Führer*.<sup>42</sup> All these elements had, to a certain degree, mystical connotations found within many forms of utopianism known as millennial thought. They also contained, especially in the case of the relentless persecution of specific sections of its society and its aggressive campaigns of war, the worst effects involving the abuse of power.

### *I. The Image of the National Community (Volksgemeinschaft)*

Within the parameters of the Nazi ideology, the primary goal was to radically alter the structure of German society to replace traditional social, political, and religious loyalties in such a way as to evoke a strong emotional connection to the state. The propaganda focused on achieving this, relied heavily on an idealised mysticism to evoke the imagery of a 'people's community'. This desire for unity stemmed from the latent perceptions of a consummate

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<sup>40</sup>Welch, Pg. 51.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., Pg. 52.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.



mythology of the past instead of events located within the present.<sup>43</sup> Propaganda and art were simultaneously utilised to construct this image which instructed the people in regards to the accomplishments of the party, and provide the justification for its demands of total loyalty.<sup>44</sup>

The basis for this conception was the principle of the 'community before the individual', and it was the theme that later became the cornerstone of the social mobilisation for war. Once the war was underway, this campaign was extended to incorporate measures for the maintenance of the resolve necessary to the military and the society as a whole. Such measures were coupled with the attempted dismantling of the existing class divisions, but there remained a marked difference between the images produced by the party's propaganda and the actual social reality. The class system remained and was as distinct and divided as at any other time in Germany's history. As far as the war was concerned, however, this campaign was more successful, though it was not due entirely to the virtues of the unity described by this propaganda, but the fear of an impending military defeat.

Nevertheless, the concept of *Volksgemeinschaft* was a utopian vehicle which aided in the mobilisation of huge segments of the German populace and allowed the party to gain control over the existing State apparatus. Under the cover of the seductive imagery of its discourse and supposed philosophy of a harmonious national unity, its violent political machinery could be assembled and utilised in a seemingly legitimate manner. In reality, such images only enslaved the people, with an emotional and intellectual idealisation of German tradition and history portrayed in a mythological form. Their need for deliverance from the hardship of the times and humiliation was too heavy a burden for the rational decision process needed to discern the real feasibility of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Though on the surface such a doctrine seemed to be the saviour of a flagging national pride, in reality, it turned out to be a fanatical fantasy which cynically promised a new epoch of German culture and influence, but only provided an avenue towards its destruction.

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., Pg. 53.

<sup>44</sup>Rauschning, Pg. 28. Rauschning describes the ramification of this call for total loyalty in terms of; "Nothing is more mistaken than to talk of a "totalitarian State" or a "classless society" within the realm of the nihilist revolution. In the place of these there is the machinery of absolute dominion, recognising independence in no sphere at all, not even in the private life of the individual; and the totalitarian collectivity of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the 'national community,' a euphemism for an atomised structureless nation."

## II. *The Doctrine of Racial Purity and The Charismatic 'Leader'*

A second propagated image utilised by the party for the mobilisation of the differing groups within the German society was based on the concept of a 'people and a country', which served as the source for the image of the *master race*. (*herrenvolk*).<sup>45</sup> This imagery sought to evoke the traditional peasant virtues of a mythical Nordic past and were reinforced by the depiction of the warrior hero as the embodiment of the sanctity of the German fatherland. It also simultaneously provoked the feeling amongst the populace that the treaty of Versailles had been a criminal act against the nation and its sacred right to reach its full potential as a culture, even if it was at the expense of the 'lower races'. In this way, the vision of a pure unsullied race could build support for the implementation of the campaign of persecution aimed at non-Germans. It was imperative that the positive image of the 'master race' be contrasted to the image of the impure *other*, which could serve as a focal point for the fears and frustration of the masses.

The fanaticism which the party provoked amongst the populace had to be continuously diverted or it would have inevitably turned against their policies and it sought to overcome this danger by reinforcing the desired sense of national unity by offsetting the 'pure' image of the German against the negative 'hybrid' image of the 'lower' races. The invention of such an enemy, could provoke the spontaneous emotions of hatred and violence which are the most successful method of unifying numerous individuals into a mass mentality that is easily controlled. With the displacement of ones misfortunes onto another party, a sense of hatred towards that party serves to satisfy the emotional vacuum left in the wake of frustration over certain existing conditions. Though hatred is the most base and simple of human emotions, it is also one of the most emotionally satisfying and easily stimulated. The production of a unified mass mentality is greatest if there is a target in which all the ills and pain of the crowd can be vented. A differentiated 'other', perceived as the cause of such frustrations serves as the perfect recipient for such a hateful revenge. This technique was an increasingly important feature to the Nazi propaganda machine as its positive images faltered. Such accusations became more prevalent as Germany's fortunes deteriorated and were expanded to strengthen the resolve to fight.

The third and final component of this propaganda machine was the mystical image of Hitler as the saviour of the German nation. He was seen as the man who embodied the national spirit and was its ultimate guardian. Such imagery found its historical basis within the Christian

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<sup>45</sup>Welch, Pg. 66.

images of the messiah and a distorted interpretation of Nietzsche's concept of the *Overman*. This imagery sought to instil within the minds of the masses, that only a man of Hitler's character could bring about a German Renaissance. It was this image of the 'guardian of Germany's destiny' that allowed Hitler to justify his claim of the title of supreme 'ruler'. The power of this position was drawn from his personal charisma and mythical status within a fabricated historical tradition instead of a legal doctrine. Thus, the office of the *Fuhrer* became the most powerful institution within the hierarchy of the party and it was this image which became the main legitimising force for the advent of the National Socialist revolution. Hitler, then became the positive symbol or image of the ideal German, who because of his willingness to sacrifice his own life for the nation, claimed the right to expect the same loyalty from his people. It was this image that completed the triad of components in the arsenal of the Nazi propaganda front which was to fulfil Germany's destiny.

### ***Overcoming The Negative Effects of Propaganda***

It may appear strange, at first glance, to utilise the conspiracy of deception against the German people by the National Socialists to reveal the connection of the historical consciousness to the forces underlying the attributes of power and utopia. In reality such an example serves to reinforce the primary assertion that this relationship is an influential force in several ways. The first, centres on the discourse that was produced by the Nazi's abuse of the potential of the utopian imagination and its intentional distortion of historical facts in order to propagate its revolutionary activities. The second, stems from the rapid ascension to power and eventual defeat of the German war machine. The party was extremely successful in the mobilisation of diverse social and political groups focusing their pursuits towards singular objectives needing a unified mass mentality for their implementation. And finally, it exemplifies the possible outcome if a repressive regime utilises such latent imagery to control a society or disguise the true nature of its actions and intentions.

Since propaganda is used in one form or another within the social and political discourse of a community, to attempt to ignore its potential effects is to face the same danger of complacency that allowed the National Socialist party to seize power, sustain its position, and lead Germany down the path to its eventual devastation. Therefore, it serves as one of the clearest historical examples of the potential influence that can be acquired through the manipulation of the ideals, values and historical mythology of a society by groups in or

seeking power. Such material is instrumental in the production of the propaganda that serves to raise and maintain support for the policies of such groups, through an appeal to the fears and prejudices of the populace that generally find their basis within the prevailing historical interpretations of the times. Hence, it is an example of the misappropriation of the utopian spirit by an administration whose intentions are not to instigate change for the sole benefit of a society, but to control it for use as a means to manifest its intentions.

Given that propaganda is intrinsic to a society's political discourse, its methodology must continually be addressed and its potential regulated by critical examination. Habitually, the propaganda of a political party, especially if it holds a dominant status in the existing division of power, seeks to place itself in a position immune from any damaging challenges. It is due to this desire that its discourse will seek to portray itself as containing the legitimacy and competency to rule. Accordingly, it is a prudent measure to examine a multitude of sources to distinguish the purely emotionally-directed propaganda from more objective political discussions. The critical method of examining discourse in the form of exploring a variety of differing interpretations can reduce the possibility of inconsistencies between certain theories and the reality of the political realm. Such a methodology contains the ability to evaluate proposals in a practical manner that could increase the chance of success in their enactment.

It is not possible to dispense with human values and emotions completely, for they are the elements of human nature which contribute and indicate our goals and aspirations. However, it is imperative, that such subjective attributes are countered-balanced by the faculty of reason which contains the capacity to stipulate the most efficient methods of realising such desires. Such a balance is difficult to achieve because such aspirations are a major factor in the composition of ones' identity. This fact makes it an arduous task to expose them to a critical examination that is objective, but if there is to be any chance of the successful implementation of such aims, the discontinuity between the speculative methods of theory and the pragmatism needed for their possible realisation must be bridged.

Since the device of propaganda, is intrinsically neutral in the moral sense as well as endemic to the machinations of groups within the social realm, it is the intentions behind, and the consequences of the actions it influences, which must be critically examined. Propaganda itself, can be utilised to bring about both positive or negative effects, so in reality, it is merely an instrument. Its potential to bring about beneficial consequences rests on its ability to evoke an interest in a certain set of ideas, values or emotions. Such an emotive interest must then become the basis from which a multitude of critical interpretations concerning its validity could spring forth. What must be avoided, is the production of a multitude of material expounding

the same view under various disguises. Discriminating exploration from varying points of view is the foundation to any 'open' society which sanctions a freedom of expression. Relentless propaganda campaigns seek to limit or discredit any objective attempts at building a varied and far reaching critical discourse and therefore serves as the foundation on which a 'closed' one is constructed. For the best of all possible worlds to exist within the structure of a society, the realisation of the former tendency must take precedence over those inherent to the latter.

This method of objective discourse becomes extremely difficult in times of social, political, or economic crisis, because any group or individual attempting such a methodology within these circumstances often becomes the focus of attacks from those wanting to maintain the existing structures and conditions of a society out of the fear concerning the uncertainty of change or for the maintenance of a privileged position. It is essential at such times that rational thought is utilised to access the actual implications of the perceived crisis and to discern the best avenues for the successful alleviation of its problems. It is only through this method that a potentially successful solution can be discovered. Because of this necessity of rational thought, the emotional content of propaganda must never be allowed to overpower the reason that is intrinsic to the intellect, nor should the faculty of reason be allowed to hinder the enthusiasm needed to undertake any actions seeking to implement changes which might bring about more desirable conditions. An excess of introspective examination can lead to inaction, and eventually stagnation through a loss of interest and support. The balance which must be struck between objectivity and enthusiastic faith is as difficult as the equilibrium involving the tendencies of power and utopia, and just as necessary.



*Book III: The Potential of This Interaction.*

## **Chapter VII:**

### ***The Necessity of Ideals***

Throughout the preceding chapters, this study has revealed the extent and means by which the inter-relationship of the forces of power and utopia influences the definition of many of the essential characteristics of the human condition. At a fundamental level, when describing the foundations of a social configuration, ideal or otherwise, these forces dictate the very nature of its essential premises and suppositions. Given this, it seems a safe assumption that in describing such a system, a reference is being made to a specific division of power, and subsequently, to the vision or ideal that underlies it. No ideology can transform the conditions of an existing society without capturing the imagination of its members. Hence, the ideal imagery produced by the utopian spirit is an important feature to the functioning of a society and serves as a central focus in the formation of a unified collective from the diverse groups located within a cultural structure.

Similarly, if an individual or group that seeks to implement certain social reforms cannot attain a position of sufficient influence, then the visions which they seek to manifest will remain images of a purely wishful nature. These factors are at the root of the assertion stipulating that the alignment of these forces influences in a profound manner, the conditions of any social configuration as well as the ideology that defines it. Therefore, any evaluation of

the potential of such a system must address the nature of the connection between these two forces. Consequently, it is imperative to understand the role and essential characteristics of the system of beliefs and ideals that define the essential parameters of a social structure. As a result, by understanding how the matrix of ideals and subsequent praxis interact at this fundamental level, it will be possible to cut through much of the ideological rhetoric in order to discern the essential premises of many existing social structures.

Through an exploration of several of the issues which arise in relation to the necessary role that ideals play in the formulation of social configurations, it will be possible to ascertain the influence that such ideals can attain. In doing so, some of the arguments against the utopian imagination and several misconceptions concerning its potential could be clarified as well. To begin this, the traditional stance against utopia must be re examined to indicate where some of these misconceptions surface. Some of these criticisms have been touched on earlier within the context of utopia's definition, but several significant issues still remain undefined which pertain to the potential of its methodology. In asserting the importance of this method of social reform and its connection to the notion of power, the argument against its procedures needs to be explored and some of its criticisms addressed directly. A classic attack lodged against this method is put forth by Karl Popper<sup>1</sup> in his text, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, and it is this argument which will serve to embody the classic anti-utopian stance. It is within this context that the necessity of the role of the ideal in the formation of human society begins to come to light.

### *I. The Case Against Utopian Speculation*

*"Everything has got to be smashed to start with. Our whole damned civilisation has got to go, before we can bring any decency into the world." 'Moulin', in Du Gard's, Les Thibaults.*

This quote<sup>2</sup> sets the tone for the critical attitude Popper takes towards the notion of utopia within his text. He envisions it, for the most part, as a form of social engineering. According to his definition, its main intention is the complete reconstruction of a society utilising a predetermined plan of action generally portrayed as rational and scientific.<sup>3</sup> One of the central factors of any rational plan is that it must contain an ultimate objective formulated in advance

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<sup>1</sup>This argument can be found in chapter 9, (Aestheticism, Perfectionism, Utopianism) of *The Open Society and Its Enemies* by Karl Popper. Volume I: The Spell of Plato. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1945) Pg. 157-168.

<sup>2</sup>Popper, Pg. 157.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Pg. 157-158.

of any action undertaken. After such an objective is decided upon, the next rational step is to determine the means which will bring about this desired end.

Consequently, the visualisation of this ultimate end is the first step that must be taken in distinguishing the hierarchical structure which orders the relationship between the preliminary, intermediate, and ultimate objectives needed to materialise it. When this principle is applied to the concept of political action, the first step is the depiction of a proper and necessary social order. It is only after the creation of such a 'blueprint' that the most efficient strategy for the achievement of such a state of affairs can be developed. These premises are claimed by those advocating such a scheme to be the most rational, and therefore containing the greatest chance of successful implementation.

Popper's central criticism of this argument rests on the idea that though such a methodology may work on objectives which are clear and straightforward by nature, the social constitution of a culture is complex enough to annul any validity that the predications of proposals advocating such sweeping changes might contain. In other words his main criticism is not directed towards the notion of utilising ideals or the conception of ideal states *per se*, but the creation of a set of ideals which calls for the complete transformation of a society's institutions through radical measures within the short term. The consequences of such an undertaking are impossible to estimate in advance, and by setting such actions in motion the members of a society are placed at the mercy of a fallible intellect. The inherent risk involved with such an intellect stems from its propensity to oversimplify the inherent diversity of the surrounding reality. Another danger emerges with actions of such magnitude, owing to the close proximity of power with its underlying interests that tend to seek the implementation of such plans to the point of dogmatism. In these circumstances, the temptation to resort to violence at the slightest hint of ideological disagreement or social unrest would be difficult to resist once the process of implementation had commenced.

Popper asserts that the aestheticism implied within such proposals is the cause of their inherent irrationality, despite their claims to the opposite. Their appearance of rationality stems solely from their superficial basis on the methods of science, and in reality, such procedures are merely the materialisation of attempts at providing a simplified abstraction describing the complexity of the social sphere. He maintains that this quest for simplified paradigms must be tempered within the field of politics by controlling those ready to conceive society as a kind of canvas which can be radically transformed by visions of abstract perfection. The characteristics of this reality must be defined by a perpetual striving for equality and founded upon sound principles of the importance of the individual, instead of

some contrived abstraction claimed as perfection. According to this argument then, the tradition of utopianism seeks to instil a hope in political miracles, but in reality, its images of perfection can be materialised only by shedding the very reason and rationale claimed to be their foundation.

His answer to such proposed setbacks revolves around the notion that any changes to the social structure of a society should be made incrementally over an extended period of time. This is due to the fact that any man-made system can only be truly efficient and workable over a protracted period and this is especially the case when dealing with the infinitely complex nature of the social sphere. The inspirations and visions of humanity must be supplemented by the experienced gained through a method of experimentation based on trial and error. It is this method that is truly related to the procedures of science and in such complex undertakings as the reformation of social and political institutions, a necessary procedure. The inevitability of mistakes in such a practice can only be overcome with a process of modest and cautious adjustments. This 'piece-meal' procedure would allow the knowledge gained through multiple smaller-scale experiments to be applied in a continuous process of reformation calibrated to the immediate needs of those involved. This technique is better prepared to accommodate the fluctuations of Man's social configurations due to its intrinsic readiness to learn from its mistakes through the formulation of procedures that address problems as they arise. It is this method and not the supposedly 'rational' method proposed by the misguided idealism of the utopians which contains the greatest chance of success within the complexity of the social and political realm.

## *II. Utopianism and Millennial Thought*

In assessing the impact of this criticism, several issues must be addressed and the seriousness of the implications of their charges carefully measured. A central issue within this critique revolves around his conception of the methodology of utopia. The main thrust of his argument is directed towards the procedure which is assumed a utopian would seek to undertake, rather than the actual content of his or her vision. There are several questions which arise concerning this conception that seem to undermine this critique and these will serve as a guide in our investigation of the validity of his argument. In the first instance, is this methodological critique of utopia based on the grounds of an inherent 'radical aestheticism' valid in all cases? Further, Is such a notion applicable to a majority of the endeavours involving utopian speculation or is his description relevant to only a specific



segment of this type of thought? And finally, if his description is too restricted, can a more accurate description of the utopian imagination be reconciled with his 'piece-meal' proposal for social reform?

On a general level, it seems that Popper's perception of utopia suffers from a similar malady as the one he attributes to the utopian: oversimplification. This criticism seems to be directly applicable to two specific types of utopian speculation; utopian social engineering and millennial thought. In the case of the latter, and more indirectly the former, the language and premises utilised are more eschatological in their foundations. Such rhetoric calls upon a certain conception of social justice to be materialised and differs from other forms of utopian thought because it draws much of its imagery from religious sources.<sup>4</sup>

The descriptions generally contained within its discourse transform the conception of the absolute and impending "judgement day" held by many religious doctrines into a chiliastic call from radical social and political transformation. Usually, such movements are described as if there is an impending revolution and underlying their calls for change is the proposal of a more extremist short term approach to social reform. Similarly, some types of utopian socialism make cognate calls for the 'clearing-away' of all the existing social institutions as well as attempting to foster an almost religious belief in the power of reason. The central similitude between the two methodologies is the adherence to dogmatic beliefs and a radical approach to social reform.

Such a trend towards this type of a revolutionary millennialism can be found in many of the modern political ideologies such as Communism and Fascism which led to the death and hardship of vast numbers of individuals due to actions based on policies generated from the intrinsic elements consistent to those found in many forms of medieval eschatology. One element that connects millennial thought to these modern ideologies is the image of a 'New Jerusalem' promised after a radical transformation to the existing social and political structures at the time. The suffering endured by the often violent measures utilised to instigate these radical changes is then justified by the promises of this end result.

Generally, such a call for revolution is coupled with a second element, which contrasts the righteousness or purity of a group to the baseness of another group. This depiction provides the moral grounds for the 'chosen' people to undertake heroic acts of extraordinary courage or

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<sup>4</sup>Amitava Ray, *Political Utopianism: Some Philosophical Problems*. (India: Minerva Associates, 1978) Pg. 30. Refer to chapter 2 of this text for a more detailed examination of the differences between utopianism and millennial thought than the space and focus of the present study will allow. Included in this chapter is an account of Norman Cohn's description of the classical forms of medieval millennial prophecy and their relation to the modern ideologies of Communism and Fascism.

bravery against these other 'darker' forces. When this race or nation reaches its potential, it will reign supreme over the inferior races or nations by a form of divine right. A third and final element habitually centres around the notion of a demagogue in the form of a human saviour which is portrayed as larger than life. Such discourse claims that it is only this person who can lead the people to the greatness heralded by this epic revolution. This cataclysmic 'cleansing' is frequently described as being contained within the context of the future, but it is the virtues of the present generation which can fulfil this prophecy. All of these aspects were prevalent features in the study of the Nazi's rise to power undertaken in the preceding chapter.

There are similar characteristics found within the more extreme forms of utopian thought described by Popper. The description of eugenic breeding in order to produce a 'pure' and 'noble' race of human habitually arises within this context. Likewise, the concept of freedom may be regulated out of existence in the name of harmony and spiritual fulfilment. Such measures are generally an open invitation to tyranny. These attributes mirror the chiliastic ones surfacing within many forms of millennial thought and usually stem from the perception involving the perpetual degradation of Mankind. However, the religious connotations are replaced by the dogmas of science and 'rational' thought.

These radical, and often paranoid fantasies contained within many supposedly utopian doctrines are valid recipients of Popper's criticism. Such dialogues often rise in popularity when there is a loss of faith concerning the values and ideals of the existing religious, or social institutions. When such systems collapse, fear begins to grip the populace, unleashing the potential for the accumulation of support for a certain group's fanatical visions. Such events happened in Germany between the wars with the ideology of the Nazi party.<sup>5</sup> These radical images do carry certain connotations similar to other forms of utopian speculation, but their conceptions are more about the accumulation of power and resources, not their fair and just distribution. Most forms of utopianism are concerned with the latter, so in reality, the only similarity is that it calls for changes to an existing social structure. Therefore, though the means of description seem similar, the extent and aims of these changes are radically different.

### *III. A Moderate Conception of Utopia and Utopian Thought*

There can be no doubt that a discourse containing rhetoric demanding the complete transformation of the institutions of a society within a short temporal span is a dangerous

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<sup>5</sup>See chapter 6, under the section heading; 'Nazi Germany: A Case Study in The Manipulation of The Historical Consciousness', for a discussion concerning Hitler's utilisation of the historical consciousness to mobilise diverse groups in support of his party's political intentions.

proposition and more than likely only a cover for the consolidation of power. Such fanatical discourse habitually ends in hardship and violence to the parties involved. Its imagery serves as an avenue for an opportunistic individual or group to seize the power to dominate by force and resisting such actions becomes difficult to stop if the general population has been successfully immersed in the propaganda of such a movement. Given this, Popper's criticism is correct in its condemnation of such discourse, but falls wide of the mark in its definition of the whole of the utopian discourse by such a methodology.

Though both utopian and millennial thought criticise their surrounding social contexts with the projection of images of alternative futures with the goal towards instigating social action, there are still a great many differences between these forms of thought.<sup>6</sup> Due to its eschatological foundations, millennial thought demands a type of faith akin to those demanded by many religions. Some forms of utopian socialism also demand a similar faith in the power and predictability of rational action. This kind of unquestioning faith requires answers and provides consolation instead of information concerning the reality of its surroundings. It habitually provides some form of messiah (either a person, an ideology, or both) a predetermined historical scheme, (i.e. a belief in 'destiny' or necessary outcome) and revolutionary measures that may be violent and apocalyptic in nature. It is these three characteristics which Popper associates with all utopian thought and therefore criticises its potential to end in violence as it is a necessary outcome of any endeavour utilising such a method.

The conception of utopian thought which has been maintained throughout this study has the potential to be more constructive due to its more neutral connotations. As envisioned within the context of this study, utopian thought sheds the burden of these apocalyptic notions with their extreme moral righteousness and calls for tumultuous revolutionary change. Its images are not necessarily indicating imperative objectives that *must* be implemented, even by violent measures if opposition arises, nor does its method claim that such goals are inescapable features of the course of history. This conception portrays the utopian imagination as a component of a dialectical process of criticism that is perpetual and contributes to the continual cycle of reformation involving the predominant ideological system of a society.

Consequently, utopian thought is an inherent part of the complex of ideals that simultaneously orders a society and projects the possibilities guiding its transformation. This conception does not envision utopian thought as the antithesis of the existing order, but as an intrinsic part of the socialising process. It provides critical suggestions indicating requisite

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<sup>6</sup>Ray, Pg. 36.

reforms for the maintenance of the entire cultural system. Therefore, because of its role in the continual reformation of the social order, it is intrinsically linked to the division of power and can serve as a foil to its potential excesses or abuses. Though in many cases its form, context, and language, may be imaginative, the essential character of the changes it seeks to evoke usually contain characteristics allowing for the possibility of their actual manifestation somewhere within the future horizon.

#### *IV. Utopian Thought As An Incremental Process of Social Change*

The discussion of the preceding sections, sheds light on the issues raised by the first of our three questions concerning Popper's argument. It seems that he is correct in his assumption that there are certain forms of thought akin to utopianism that can be inherently dangerous to the very society they seek to transform, but the validity of this argument wanes if it is asserted that it applies to all utopian thought. As was indicated earlier, certain depictions of the betterment of the human condition have been utilised at various times in history in order to disguise actions depriving individual freedom instead of increasing it, but such occurrences are not a necessary outcome of such events.

Catastrophic conditions have materialised in experiments that were too extreme or of too large a scale. It is because of events like the communist revolution in Russia that a prejudice has developed against this form of thought. However, utopianism is latent in all social and political machinations, so it cannot be discounted completely. Such conditions do not arise from the method itself, but with the magnitude and underlying intentions behind the reformation implemented. In light of the broader definition presented above, it would seem possible to salvage the utopian methodology as a valid form of speculation. What Popper seems to be criticising is not the use of ideals as a guide towards realising the potential of a society, but a dogmatic and unquestioning adherence to inflexible objectives realised at any cost.<sup>7</sup> Given the possible outcome of such actions, it would be hard for a 'rational' individual to argue.

In grappling with the final question concerning the possible alignment of the proposed 'piece meal' approach to social reform and the utopian methodology, such connections seem not only possible but essential. In Popper's conception of a process of long-term experiments within an incremental system of social reform, the utopian propensity to ask *what if?....*, seems to be a necessary component to such a practice. After all, most experiments in science

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<sup>7</sup>Popper, Pg. 161.

begin with a conjecture or hypothesis that then serves to guide the research procedure. Generally, when new information is discovered, the original hypothesis is adjusted and more experiments are undertaken to reinforce or test its validity. Any individual undertaking an experiment understands the necessity for imaginative conjectures in solving problems arising at various stages within the research procedure.

When transferring the methodology of science to the social and political context, the imagery provided by the utopian could serve as a form of conjecture pertaining to future possibilities. It is difficult to solve a social problem without some conception of how the segment of society where the problem exists could be transformed to alleviate it. This is where the notion of an ideal plays an important part. For example, in addressing the problem of unemployment, one must formulate some conception of what full employment would be like as well as the virtues of its existence. It is only then that certain hypothesis can be made defining possible solutions for the dilemma. This action is vital to the nature of overcoming problems as well as gaining support for the potential solutions to solve them.

Given this, it would seem that the 'piece-meal' methodology that Popper proposes would benefit from the insertion of an element of utopian speculation. There will always be the potential for abuse of the utopian imagination owing to its inherent link to individual desires which are easily manipulated or controlled. It is for this reason that the forces bent on gaining power in an absolute form will seek to use its images as a disguise for certain actions. The balance of power within a society is precarious during times of change or unrest, so social actions within this context should be taken with a view to prudence. Thus, Popper's call for careful and measured consideration before any social action is endeavoured upon seems definitely warranted. However, this doesn't entail the jettisoning of ideals as a guide to potential futures, but does imply the necessity for understanding their essential nature.

### ***The Utilisation of Ideals, The Imagination, and The Concept of "Good"***

*All politics imply a certain idea of man. - Paul Valery*<sup>8</sup>

As discovered above, when one is describing a 'no place' that is not actually manifested in the material sense, one is referring to a mental image that is not located in a tangible way (i.e.

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<sup>8</sup>Quoted in the note of dedication in John Gunnell, *Political Philosophy and Time*. (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1968).



it cannot be experienced directly by the human senses) within the temporal and spatial context of the present. Correspondingly, the act of creating a utopia entails the projection of a mental image of a community whereby the conception of its political structure and social conditions are ideally situated to portray a certain standard of perfection. But, this standard may be difficult or impossible to create in the material sense within the surroundings of its conception. Given this, one must assume that by its intrinsic nature an object of the human imagination, such as a utopia, is probably not attainable in its entirety.

Therefore, the impetus for its creation does not exist entirely within the objective reality of the material world, but also includes visions located within the human imagination. This inner subjective world of the imagination inevitably influences humanity's perception of the external reality through the construction of a system that relies on ideals or symbols as paradigms that define Man's field of potential action. This network of the mental images, acts as an interpretative apparatus for the translation of experiences within the material world while simultaneously projecting images which allow the individual the means to transform this reality. Hence, this conceptual framework gives an individual a unique 'point of reference' which instils a sense of meaning and purpose to its existence.<sup>9</sup>

It is this sense of meaning that serves as the foundation for the ordering of the chaotic perceptions of the surrounding environment. Such an order is a fundamental component of the human ability to define its existence creatively by allowing its consciousness to exist within all three temporal horizons simultaneously. Consequently, it is this conceptual framework that envisions future possibilities within the present that are combined with the collective memories of the past. In this way, the past and future tense bestows meaning upon ones existence within the present and it is by analysing this system that the fundamental character of its role in human existence can be brought to light. This process of interpretation grants the human consciousness the ability to undertake creative action through the manipulation of the material objects within the world. It is the attempts at the integration of these unique psychological attributes which inevitably produces autonomous interpretations of reality as well as ideals concerned with ones desired mode of existence.<sup>10</sup>

In illustrating such an intricately complex process, it is necessary to comprehend the intrinsic characteristics of an ideal and its relation to the faculty of the imagination. Further, the implications of this relationship must be addressed within the context of a common "good" which is generally implicit to the utopian endeavour. Three questions will be addressed in

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<sup>9</sup>Gunnell, Pg. 4. See also Pg. 118 of this text.

<sup>10</sup>Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*. trans. G. E. M. Anscombe. (New York: Macmillan, 1953), Pg. 226e. *Op. cit.*: Gunnell, Pg. 5.

regards to the relationship of ideals and the imagination. What is the nature of ideals and their implicit function in the formulation of the social structures of Man? What are the fundamental parameters of the human imagination and how are they related to the notion of ideals? And lastly, what influence do such issues bear on the conception of the "good" postulated by the utopian imagination?

### *I. The Intrinsic Nature of Ideals*

An intrinsic characteristic of human existence is the inherent sense of discontentment that manifests itself as the longing to overcome the perceived obstacles blocking the avenue to fulfilment. This sense of *lack* drives the essential being of Man to strive towards the transformation of its surrounding environs in an effort to overcome this feeling. The mental images of a desired state of perfection directing human actions are known as ideals. Such notions generally differ from what is ordinarily conceived as an idea, because it pertains to the "...answering to ones highest conception, visionary, or a state of perfection or one that is supremely excellent."<sup>11</sup> Thus, ideals serve as the ultimate objectives which constitute and direct Man's subjective striving to transform the world. It is the projection of such impressions that bestow upon humans the ability to think and act creatively. They guide the perpetual quest of overcoming the resistance of the external world, and enables humanity to rise above being totally controlled by, and at the mercy of, the eternal forces of such a reality. Under the guidance of these visions, Mankind carves out its intrinsic freedom within the temporal and spatial horizon of its habitation. This freedom is the fundamental defining factor of humanity, so to deny it, is to deny the avenue to a creative life and the activity that shapes our humanity.

Consequently, the action of formulating an ideal entails proposing something desirable, yet unrealisable within the present conditions.<sup>12</sup> However, though it may be unrealisable, to be

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<sup>11</sup>R. E. Allen, ed. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) Pg. 585.

<sup>12</sup>Plato, *The Republic*. trans. H. D. P. Lee. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd. 1955) Pg. 232. Within this dialogue, Socrates describes the role of the ideal and distinguishes between it and the real in the phrase; "'Then we were looking for an ideal when we tried to define justice and injustice, and to describe what the perfectly just or perfectly unjust man would be like if he ever existed. By looking at these perfect patterns and the measure of happiness or unhappiness they would enjoy, we force ourselves to admit that the nearer we approximate to them the more nearly we share their lot. That was our purpose, rather than to show that they could be realised in practice, was it not?'.....'That, then, is the truth of the matter. But if I'm to go on, to oblige you, and show how and under what conditions we can get nearest our ideal, you must admit that the same principles apply.' 'What principles?' 'Does practice ever square with theory? Is it not in the nature of things that, whatever people think, practice should fall short of the precision of theory? What do you think?'

valid it must not be impossible.<sup>13</sup> A unrealisable ideal serves as a valid objective because its characteristics are intrinsically connected to the circumstances of the reality which spawn it. Because such an ideal is essentially grounded within the present, the striving to fulfil its potential contains the capacity to produce intermediate benefits throughout the process of transformation it instigates. This potential surfaces when an ideal is in alignment with the lives of the individuals that its visions seek to alter. When this circumstance arises, an ideal serves as an objective with the possibility of producing beneficial results. Yet, if an ideal contains little or no relation to the circumstances of its present context, the exertion spent to realise it will not produce a measured and steady process of change which is in the best interest of those involved, but may instigate extreme changes which can cause massive social and political upheavals. Such turmoil will destroy the important equilibrium of forces that makes a free society possible. The ideals often projected within millennial thought, are of this latter type and have produced many occurrences of this nature throughout history.

Thus, the ideals with the potential to produce beneficial changes are those which are possible because they correspond to the conditions of the present context. They do not advocate elements that are logically impossible, but are only unrealisable within the context of their conception. In other words, such ideals are aligned with the essential qualities of human nature and their realisation doesn't involve any denial of the central values or characteristics of the context of the individuals or communities seeking their manifestation.<sup>14</sup> Such ideals must be projected far enough into the future to remain as a valid objective for several generations. If, however, an ideal is projected too far in advance or it is impossible to achieve, it fails to produce the sense of purpose that underlies most creative acts. In this circumstance, it only succeeds in disillusioning individuals because they are battling the external forces of reality in a contradictory manner. They are not only struggling against the resistance of the outside world, but the central characteristics of their humanity. Hence, an ideal's most important quality is that it must be constructive so as to serve as an incentive, one which mirrors the values and conditions of the society which formulated them. By this then, there are certain conditions which have the possibility to be overcome by the industriousness of Man and others which are impossible. Therefore, an essential element to a valuable and beneficial ideal is that it must distinguish properly between these differing conditions and reflect the ones that are related to man's intrinsic ability. Only an ideal such as this can induce a valid striving to reach man's potentiality.

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<sup>13</sup>Aldous Huxley, *Proper Studies*. (London: Chatto & Windus, 1927) Pg. 261.

<sup>14</sup>Huxley, Pg. 263.

## II. Ideals and The Imagination

The component of the human consciousness that creates the mental images of these ideals is the faculty of the imagination. In short, ideals are imaginary constructs contained within the human mind. According to the common conception of the imagination, such a mental faculty is conceived as being counter to, or removed from, the reality of the external world. It is true that the imagination contains the capacity to create highly inventive mental images, but it is also involved in the most ordinary sensual perceptions and experiences of our surrounding environment. At an essential level then, the imagination contains the capacity for the creation of images which are mental by nature, (as opposed to what is commonly conceived as material) and manifested in two possible ways. One is passive by nature, because of its involvement in the interpretation of sensory impressions, while the other is actively creative, due to its utilisation in the construction of unique fictions.<sup>15</sup>

In the case of the former, the imagination is concerned with the interpretation of the disparate data perceived by the human senses. This component of the imagination is fundamental to the understanding of the world, and is universal to everyone. Within the context of Kant's terminology, it is the transcendental or *a priori* type of imagination. The images produced by this component attempt to discover the connections within the disparate information gathered by the senses in order to formulate a coherent understanding of the totality of the external world. The latter, is located on the other extreme of the consciousness and is considered to be the empirical component. This term describes the inherent power of the human consciousness to create images that are fictitious, illusory, and may hold no connection to the conditions of the external world. Unlike the portion of the imagination that is connected to perception, such a capacity varies widely amongst individuals.<sup>16</sup>

Kant's conception of the faculty of the imagination places it as a separate and distinct component from the rest of the faculty of human consciousness. It is located between our intellectual knowledge of the world, which consists of thoughts involving the abstract nature of elements and its perceptual imagery as compiled by the senses. According to this argument then, without the intellectual component of the imagination, our perception of the surrounding environment would be lacking in any notion of coherence while without the experience of the senses, the images of the creative intellect would be void of any connection to the conditions of the external world.<sup>17</sup> In other words, Kant's theory of the imagination envisions a dual

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<sup>15</sup>Mary Warnock, *Imagination*. (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1976) Pg. 10.

<sup>16</sup>Warnock, Pg. 26.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., Pg. 30.



function which enables Man to recognise objects within the world essential to obtaining an intrinsic understanding of its fundamental character. It also provides the intellect with a faculty for producing a uniquely creative mental imagery. In short, the imagination is conceived as a mental *power* within the human consciousness that undertakes the dual role of representing objects previously encountered in reality and creating novel mental images.<sup>18</sup>

Sartre takes a similar view to Kant concerning this subject in terms of its being the image-making power involved in consciousness, but departs from this description in the area of Kant's claims depicting it as a component that is over, above, or separate from the other elements which comprise consciousness. By Sartre's conception, the imagination is an inseparable constituent element in the process of the consciousness that discovers its nature by exercising its intrinsic freedom. Like Kant, he asserts that perception of the elements of reality is primarily involved in the act of interpretation with the eternal world being a concrete given that surrounds the faculty of human consciousness. This consciousness is inherently free, in that at every passing instant it contains the potential to produce a mental image that is abstract and unreal. As a result, this image is produced outside of reality by a consciousness that is grounded firmly within it. Because of this potential, the consciousness is able to negate the given circumstances of the present and move beyond them.<sup>19</sup> This roughly outlines the meaning of Sartre's statement; "the imaginary makes its appearance on the foundation of the world."<sup>20</sup>

With this assertion, Sartre clearly moves away from Kant's conception of the imagination as an interpretative faculty located somewhere between sensual perception and the production of abstract mental concepts. The former argument places greater emphasis on the unity of the consciousness by depicting each act of comprehension concerning a 'real' element within the world as an implicit surpassing of it towards the imaginary. Thus, the production of the mental images of the consciousness described as imaginary, in the sense of being separate from the 'real' of the world, actually utilises the constituent elements uncovered within this context as a resource for their construction. In turn, all interpretation concerning this reality depends upon this 'imaginative consciousness' to provide the *meaning* of a particular situation. Therefore, the comprehension of the 'nothingness' of the mental image is reliant upon, and develops incrementally, through a succession of actions concerned with the surrounding

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., Pg. 34.

<sup>19</sup>J. P. Sartre, *The Psychology of Imagination*, trans. Bernard Frechtman. (New York: Washington Square Press Inc., 1966) Pg. 243

<sup>20</sup>Sartre, Pg. 245.



concrete environment. Reciprocally, this same 'nothingness' of the mental image becomes the foundation for the passage beyond the concrete world towards the imaginary.<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, the imagination, as depicted by this description is not merely considered as an appendage to the consciousness, but is actually *the* 'essential and transcendental condition of the conscious, and thus, inseparable from the unified totality of human consciousness. This faculty is not a passive faculty, but an active one, for it is the inherent driving force in the expression of human freedom. It is this act of consciousness, that enables man to surpass the given of his surroundings, thereby allowing it to be considered as a *power* contributing to the intellect. The exercise of such a faculty is fundamental to the existence of Mankind, for its images are not a wasteful excess, but a fundamental expression of the freedom of the human consciousness.

### ***Ideals, The Imagination, and Conceptions of the "Good"***

Following from this, the conception of a utopia can be considered an act of the imagination in which an image of an alternative reality is separate from, but related to, the concrete one surrounding its conception. Its projected images are potential avenues that can facilitate a 'moving beyond' these conditions. This is the important point that surfaces in Sartre's discussion of the imagination which pertains to utopia. For its inherent strength is its ability to *surpass* the conditions of its present surroundings. It is by this action that the consciousness expresses its intrinsic freedom. This notion of *surpassing* or *overcoming* the present is also an important component of Nietzsche's description of the *will to power* and Bloch's *anticipatory consciousness*. Hence, it is within Sartre's notion of the imagination that we are presented with a unified conception of these arguments through the emphasis of the importance of the mental image to the fundamental nature of Man's existence.

If, as Sartre asserts, the activity of the imagination is an essential manifestation of the transcendental consciousness, then the formulation of the ideals as depicted in many utopian endeavours is an essential part of the expression of Man's essential nature as freedom. Such ideal worlds are the embodiment of desires, and influence our perceptions and actions within the external world. This relationship between the mental and material world is reciprocal because the concrete nature of the world defines the limits which the mental image seeks to surpass. Given this, it is the imagination which serves as the essential component in the

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., Pg. 246.

construction of the ideal worlds of utopia, and therefore, it is the intrinsic link between these mental constructs and the concrete reality of the external world.

It is imperative to note that with such acts of the imagination, there is an implicit call for the overcoming of the present that will result in an expression of a 'good'. The true utopian endeavour projects an imagery, rightly or wrongly, which the author feels will bring about benevolent conditions. An important quest in the interpretation of any utopian text is to discern the fundamental implication of what such a notion of the "good" truly entails. If such conditions could come about only at the repression of a large number of other individual's quest for their "good", they become suspect and more related to the accumulation of power than to the utopian spirit.

In relation to the theories of the imagination and the nature of ideals then, an ideal depicting a certain potential interpretation of existence can be formulated in one of two ways.<sup>22</sup> In the first instance, an ideal can be expressed in relation to a utopia as a depiction of the "good life" in terms of undertaking measures that develop the essential qualities of communal life to the highest degree possible. In the second, such ideals can be utilised as a guide for the production of the "good human". What is meant by this expression is that such ideals serve as directives for an individual to develop to their utmost potential within the finite span of a life. An implicit feature of both of these methods is the notion of well-being and individual interest. Something considered "good" for an individual increases the avenues for the pursuit of his/her interests. Hence, an intrinsic quality of ideals is their relation to the subjective conscious of an individual, but the utopian methodology takes the notion of ideals into the realm of the community. It is within the context of this transformation that its linkage to power occurs, and it is imperative that the emphasis on the potential of the individual to define the parameters of his/her well-being be maintained as far as possible. With this in mind, we can now turn our focus towards outlining the role that power and utopia play in realising such a potential.

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<sup>22</sup>Thomas Hurka, *Perfectionism*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) Pg. 18.

## **Chapter VIII:**

### ***On Power and Utopia***

After uncovering the various effects of the interaction of the underlying forces of power and utopia, it is now possible to conclude this exploration by addressing the question put forth at the beginning of this study: What are the fundamental characteristics of the connection between the attributes of power and utopia, and how do they affect the human condition? In addressing this principal question, our study comes full circle. Within the preceding discussions concerning the potential outcomes of the interrelationship of these forces, it has emerged that this relationship is centrally influential to the human condition. The ideals of utopia and utopian thought profoundly affect the perceptions and expectations involving this condition and influences the definition of cultural institutions which inform and order the lives of its individual members. Such imagery emerges within the minds of common men speculating upon their immediate desires as well as world leaders with visions pertaining to the potential ordering of huge societies. It is the values contained within these images that can inspire the formation of collectives stimulating a co-operative spirit or directly influence the facilitation of their disintegration.

Similarly, it has also emerged that such a collective spirit can be in unison with or take action against, the ideology of the ruling elite within a given social context. This inherent

potential to affect the predominant ruling contingent within a society, intrinsically links the imagery produced by the utopian imagination to the ideology underlying an existing division of power. It is this capacity to produce emotive imagery capable of instigating praxis at all levels of existence, from fundamental notions of Being to the formulation of a collective psyche, which intertwines and connects these forces.

Consequently, given their central position, the potential response to this overriding question indicates that the essential connection between power and utopia lies within the context of the expression of Man's creative freedom. This response leads into one of the great debates within the history of ideas, the controversy between the advocates of freewill and those supporting determinism. The preceding explorations of notions such as power, utopia, the imagination, and the nature of ideals, all contain implications referencing this debate. It concerns issues surrounding the possibility of Man containing the capacity to make non-externally determined choices or whether such forces condition his actions completely. The theories of Nietzsche, Bloch, and Sartre, all seem to imply that there is a certain area of human existence which allows for the concept of freedom to be applied to the will. Contrary to this position is the doctrine of historical determinism which asserts that Man's actions are completely dependent on the casual chain of events that are determined by the external forces unleashed within the sequence of the world's historical events.

Our preliminary response is seemingly committed to the former conception, but the extent of Man's capacity for undetermined praxis remains to be resolved. Sartre's view on the subject provides a substantial clue towards the attainment of a workable position rectifying these opposing perspectives, but before exploring this view, it is imperative to outline and clarify the respective arguments. It is within this context that the foundations for the discovery of the role of power and utopia in the expression of humanity's intrinsic freedom will emerge.

### *I. Determinism vs. Freewill*

In undertaking this, we will begin with the determinist's position. The foundation for this perspective rests on a conception of the world process where the arrangement of elements at a particular instance in time causes or determines the ordering of the subsequent state of affairs emerging within the next instance of time. There are two important implications arising from such a conception. The first, implies that within this world, there exists an element of predictability,<sup>1</sup> and if there is sufficient factual knowledge of the preceding events available, an

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<sup>1</sup>Allan M. Munn, *Freewill & Determinism*. (London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1960) Pg. 207.

accurate prediction of subsequent events is possible. The second, stems directly from this, and entails the assertion that all potential actions or movements of a particular element within a specific circumstance are determined by the conditions that preceded it. In relation to Man's existence, this implies that all his actions are actually conditioned solely by external forces and have little to do with an inner subjective will which contains the ability to implement free acts outside the influence of these conditions.

In the materialist argument of Marxism, historical and social events comprise a superstructure of interrelations that determine the thoughts and actions of the individuals contained within it. According to this doctrine, an important historical figure such as Joseph Stalin rose to power, made certain decisions and took subsequent action with characteristics dictated completely by his surroundings. Uniquely individual thoughts or qualities outside these external conditions had no influence on the actions that were endeavoured upon within the context of his lifetime. The superstructure of history determined the abstract universal characteristics of Stalin's position and the individual known by that name assumed it. If it had not been this exact individual, another individual with similar characteristics conditioned by the movements of history would arise to fulfil this position. So, the superstructure determines the composition of the necessary characteristics of the historical figure of a "Stalin" and an individual rises to fulfil the position. If not Stalin, someone akin to him, so the historical outcome would inevitably be the same.<sup>2</sup>

Contrary to this position is the belief that there is a small area of unpredictability within the world that allows humans the capacity for undertaking externally non-compelled acts. Such a notion allows for a measure of choice and leaves room for the influence of actions undertaken by the volition of humans. This permits for the possibility that a certain individual contains within its essential nature, an attribute of freewill that affords choices that are not directly compelled by external forces. In short, there is the potential for a human being to undertake an action which is not directly compelled or determined by the forces of the state of affairs directly preceding it.<sup>3</sup> Thus, owing to the fact that an individual has the power or freedom to take such actions, a person must assume the responsibility for the consequences of it. By this, one could assume that it was only the unique individual known as Joseph Stalin who could have made the exact decisions or undertaken certain actions uniquely relating to his character. In doing so, historically momentous events were determined during his lifetime. Thus, the

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<sup>2</sup>J. P. Sartre, *Search for a Method*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963) Pg. 83.

<sup>3</sup>Munn, Pg. 201.



unique attributes of this individual, at least partly influenced the course of history, and therefore he was responsible for the consequences brought about by his decisions and actions.

Accordingly, this view places great emphasis on the freedom of the individual to act in harmony with its inner subjective nature and plays down, somewhat, the influence of external conditions. Its critics assert that such a theory denies the connection of the human will and its surrounding environment, and the extreme *contra-causal* notion of freewill does imply a randomness to human actions and events influenced by an inner subjectivity exercising its freewill. Such a critique seems to be inaccurate on certain counts because if all human acts are random, then how is it possible that Man can develop any understanding of the world or predict the likely outcome of actions which are the foundation for rational decision making? Within such a context, the comprehension of actions or their potential consequences would be completely impossible.

A position which could overcome these problems postulates the possibility of simultaneously sustaining a belief in both freewill and determinism.<sup>4</sup> Such a theory proposes that there is the existence of a human potential to undertake a free act within the context of a largely determinate world. This implies that past conditions and events determine the field of possibilities in which free choices can be made. External conditions and behavioural patterns may limit the range of possible choices, but as long as several options remain there must be some notion of freewill that is reliant upon the unique characteristics of our inner subjective nature. Sartre takes such a view in his attempt at producing a political theory which reconciles many of the differences within the seemingly opposing views of Marxism and Existentialism. His theory of the imagination described in the previous chapter is intrinsically connected to this argument and consequently so are the attributes of power and utopia. Within this premise, many of the issues surfacing in the discussion of the views of Bloch and Nietzsche also surface. It is here that the relation between the subjectivity of Man and the objectivity of the external world can be uncovered.

## *II. The Relation of Marxism and Existentialism*

In undertaking such a reconciliation, Sartre begins by outlining a conception of human freedom which can be understood in relation to the historically determined framework proposed by Marxist theory. In doing this, he sets out to prove that the position held by the

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<sup>4</sup>Munn, Pg. 202. See also, Section 8 of *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding* by David Hume which exemplifies the classic conception of the compatibilist argument.

Marxists which stipulates that the socio-historical superstructure of the external reality defines the 'abstract ideological character' of the individual is correct, but also the unique intentions and choices made by such an individual reciprocally influences the characteristics of this superstructure. Neither assumes an overwhelmingly predominant importance, for each is influenced by and intrinsically connected to the characteristics of the other. It is this action that serves as the vehicle for the expression of man's essential freedom. The embodiment of the foundation for this view is found in Sartre's statement: *Men themselves make history, but in a given environment which conditions them.*<sup>5</sup>

This statement depicts the complexity of the reality of the world in the material sense as a unity of forms which only become apparent to Man through the activity of the consciousness. Armed with the faculty of the imagination, his inner subjective nature ventures into this external environment, which is presented in the form of a field of possibilities involving potential action. The world then, to a certain extent, is utilised for Mankind's projects, but the range of possibilities encountered within it is by no means unlimited. It contains considerable latent pressures which resist and influence the decisions of an individual. However, the inherent make-up of the human consciousness separates the characteristics of its Being from other elements found within the world that are completely conditioned by these pressures. Though Man may contain a materiality similar to these objects, the faculty of the consciousness is the element that separates the qualities and potential of his existence from them by affording a possibility for undertaking creative action. Therefore, within the conditions imposed by the external forces of reality there is a limited area open for the exercise of the creative faculty of the imagination. It is this consciousness which directs the actions that enable an individual to express its essential freedom.<sup>6</sup>

Such action is defined and driven, in large part, by the sense of urgency caused by an underlying *besoin* or need intrinsic to the existence of Man. By also emphasising this *necessity*, instead of relying solely on the attribute of human desire to describe the latent compulsive force behind Man's action, Sartre restrains the conception of the consciousness traditionally related to the contra-causal argument. He replaces this interpretation of an unlimited freedom driven only by an inner subjective volition with one that allows for the influence of the external pressures of reality. This element of necessity intrinsic to existence simultaneously stimulates and limits the actions of Man. In this way, the freedom essential to human existence is regulated by the scarcity encountered within the objective world. These

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<sup>5</sup>Sartre, Pg. 86.

<sup>6</sup>Hazel Barnes, located in the introduction to *Search For a Method*, Pg. xii.

pressures actually make such freedom compulsory, in that Man contains the capacity to make free choices and take certain undetermined actions. As a result of this situation, he does not have the freedom to forego this exercise. In other words, one of the intrinsic conditioning pressures of existence is that Humanity must exercise its freedom of choice in order to survive. Thus, through the notion of scarcity, which is inherent to its constitution, the world exhibits itself as the field of possibility for human existence, but also as the criteria for its non-existence as well.<sup>7</sup>

Through this definition of the essential freedom of humanity being intricately connected to the necessity of survival, Sartre reinforces his claim that the subjectivity of the inner nature unique to each individual is conditioned to the extent necessary for its successful encounter with the circumstances found within the world. His argument stresses the reciprocal nature of this relationship between the Being of the world and that of Man. Mankind's striving to surpass the given circumstances of the present involves a leap that simultaneously uncovers and reinforces the conditions of the reality it seeks to overcome. In turn, this reality perpetually resists every action or movement undertaken to surpass it. Thus, Man is "the product of his product", owing to the fact that the socio-historical structures which his subjective consciousness influences, in turn, define the range of possibilities presented from the objective position where his actions commence. In short, the conditions of ones' existence within reality delineates the range of possible actions an individual may take and it is this potential which then directs the extent that such conditions can be surpassed. In light of this, one can assume that the field of possibility of any individual is directly dependent upon their position and the conditions of the surrounding social reality determined by the preceding events of history as well as the intensity of their inner will in overcoming them.

Hence, society is not presented to each individual as an inert set of circumstances determined by past events which completely dictates its actions, but serves as a ground for a certain unique 'perspective for the future'. Such a perspective *motivates* action instead of determining it. The material conditions of the present influence the *character* of Man, but it is the striving to surpass this given that defines in a uniquely individual manner, the essential freedom and choices made involving the potential of the future. Such exertion, both mentally and physically, instils within existence its meaning and purpose. This is emphasised in Sartre's statement: *Man defines himself by his project*.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, Mankind is created by the history which, in turn, it creates. It is at this point that the foundation for the reconciliation of

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., Pg. xv-xvi.

<sup>8</sup>Sartre, Pg. 152.

Marxism and Existentialism is brought to light, and subsequently a tenable position advocating a notion of freewill as well.

### ***The Fundamental Interaction Between Power and Utopia***

This discussion provides an insight into the intrinsic connection of the forces which have been the focus of this study. The inference within Sartre's argument between the desires of Man's inner nature and the pressures inflicted by the external world begins to indicate the importance of the necessary roles of certain attributes of existence as expressed by Nietzsche's concept of the *Will To Power* and Bloch's *Anticipatory Consciousness*. It is the equilibrium of these drives which defines the human condition and focuses Mankind's innate capacity towards avenues allowing it to overcome the resistance of its given present circumstance. In other words, it is through this process that Man's specific field of possibility is defined. Thus, the essential characteristics of its existence are defined through the dialogue between the creative spirit of the subjective consciousness and its encounter with the external world. The elements constituting this interrelation fluctuate and transform continually with each turn of this formative process, so that no one element holds greater sway over the another, but all inform it simultaneously.

*Without vision, there is no power; without power, vision is impotent.* This then, is our response to the question concerning the connection between the attributes of power and utopia. Without one of these elements, the equilibrium of the formative process is broken, which removes the potential for the full expression of man's essential freedom. Consequently, the faculty of the imagination is therefore considered as a *power* (i.e., a capacity), owing to its central role in the emergence of this freedom to endeavour upon creative action. Also, it is the imagination that is at the root of the utopian impulse and its manifest desire for the creation or discovery of the 'new'. Thus, through his innate capacity and creative spirit, Man *dominates* his surroundings. However, the creative drive underlying this impulse exerts itself over the elements it uncovers within the external world as a matter of necessity, both in body and spirit.

This necessity stems from the resistance of these external elements that subsequently dominate human action by limiting this potential to a specific field of possibility. This external coercion contains a profound effect on the human condition due to the inherent scarcity of resources. It is this situation that is being referenced when the balance of forces between the creative expression of Man's being and the resistance of the world, is said to define the extent

of its freedom. Thus, the interaction of these attributes form the perpetual state of Man's Being as Becoming.

By re-visualising the traditional conception of utopia as a process of critical discourse instead of a mere static spatial depiction, the 'no-place' signified by men such as Thomas More, becomes intrinsically connected to the temporality of Being. Therefore, when speaking of utopia in relation to the temporal being of humanity, one is not merely describing an ideal set of possible conditions frozen in a specific historical circumstance, but an infinite temporal process of speculation played out over a continuous series of finite individual life spans. The transcendental impetus of utopia's potential lies in its ability to continually provide ideals that can focus Man's attempts to overcome the given of the present. It is only through this interrelationship between ideals and action that his outermost potentiality can be reached. In other words, the spiritual characteristics of utopia have the capacity to instil a sense of purpose or meaning to this existence. An individual will readily undertake great effort and perceive it as fulfilling if there is a sense of purpose providing direction towards the manifestation of a value or ideal. The effort put forth in attempting to achieve such an end is more a source of fulfilment, than the realisation of the ultimate goal in itself. Since a singular event cannot lead to fulfilment, it takes a sequence of events extended over time to achieve this. Hence, utopia must be considered in relation to the passage of time.

So, how is this conception of a temporally-based process of utopia linked to the concept of power? It is connected in two essential ways. The first is concerned with the utilisation of the faculty of the imagination. The use of this propensity is inherent to the creation of utopias and the utopian endeavour, and as stated above<sup>9</sup>, essentially a power in terms of its being a *capacity*. The human consciousness surpasses the conditions of its existing circumstances through the projection of mental images which interpret perceptions concerned with the external world and then formulate objectives directing the actions taken within these conditions. Thus, utopia is connected to power because it focuses Man's strengths towards the transformation of the surrounding environment. In short, this interrelationship of the forces of power and utopia allows the potential for creative action that can transform an existing circumstance.

The drives underlying these attributes are manifested as influential characteristics of man's nature and affect the gamut of contexts comprising the human condition (i.e. social, political, & historical). The impulse underlying power compels men to strive for control over their surroundings, while the utopian imagination seeks to instigate creative changes to its

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<sup>9</sup>See chapter II, Pg. 51-52, above.



immediate environment. These characteristics translate to the social realm by influencing the formation of the institutions and the general distribution of power and resources within a social configuration. In general terms, there is an inherent socialisation process which disciplines individual appetites by the regulation of desires in accordance to the accepted norms and customs of the prevailing social structures. These structures seek to channel an individual's energies towards actions which will reinforce the existing fabric of a society and the position of the favoured functionaries within it.

On the other side, an individual will strive as much as possible to inscribe its unique will upon such structures by seeking to instigate their transformation. Here, the central theme in Plato's *Republic* comes to the forefront and is manifested as the fine line maintained within the social realm of Man between co-operation bringing social stability, or free expression intrinsic to creativity and innovation. It is the grey area between these impulses that serves as the point of connection between the attributes of power and utopia. If this interaction has reached and maintains a healthy equilibrium, a condition conducive to undertaking a creative existence is produced. So, for the creation of a state of affairs where individuals can reach their full potential, it is imperative to create social structures that are sufficiently stable to provide the security necessary for creativity, yet flexible enough to allow its inhabitants to surpass its boundaries without destroying the essence of these institutions.

This perpetually evolving equilibrium is embodied within the development of a culture in the tendency for the ruling body to regulate and control an ever widening sphere of the lives of the individuals contained within its jurisdiction. At a certain point in a culture's history, the regulation of the freer, more chaotic sections of society produces a sufficient amount of security so that large amounts of wealth can be generated through the co-operative efforts of its members. Within this context, the vigorous spirit of innovation is still strong due to the feeling of independence is still fired within a large number of individuals. This spirit induces great achievements which bring added benefits to the lives of those involved. When such circumstances prevail, the balance between customs, norms, and laws interact with the spirit of independent thought, that spawns the energetic drive for innovation. This spirit is usually contained within the segments of society related to the arts and sciences, which can uncover the tools and theories necessary for positive change.

Such a balanced mixture of stability and change is irretrievably damaged if a government consolidates its control through the implementation of excessive constraints on such actions. The spirit of innovation embodied within the utopian imagination is then stifled and the society begins to stagnate. The fictions responsible for the propagation of new values or ideals

become flaccid and impotent to the point that a society no longer has the capacity to match the achievements of its ancestors. History becomes a romantic activity involved in the recollection of past glories. A culture caught in this cycle no longer looks to its future as the basis for its identity, but relies on its past. When this disintegration of the future perspective takes place, the decline of the culture is already well underway.

Therefore, for the intrinsic health of a society, it is imperative to maintain the creative spirit of change as far as possible without damaging its internal stability. There must always be outlets for the utopian imagination amongst the structures of society and the aims of the State apparatus must attempt to provide the necessary security needed in a just society so that individuals may pursue activities facilitating their well-being. If a state pursues regulation in the name of security too vigorously, it may be successful in providing its inhabitants with a secure life, but at the price of its being tedious or monotonous. An overly secure existence inevitably breeds a lethargic attitude which undermines the ability to live creatively.

The element of initiative provided by individuals outside the statistical norm of a society, such as the utopians, is therefore imperative in regards to its moral, artistic, and intellectual development. It is the vision and activities of such persons which serve as harbingers of change that can deliver the beneficial effects to the mass population. Though at the time of their emergence, many innovative ideas may be considered unpopular or unnecessary by all but a small minority, it is the perseverance of this spirit in the face of resistance, which inevitably brings necessary changes to people's lives. A totalitarian regime can quite easily establish a sense of security through its regulation of most of the factors involved in the lives of the individuals under its sovereignty, but what such a regime cannot allow is the proposal of changes which originate from outside its ruling elite. The inspiration for innovation is only allowed to emerge from within the structure itself, and as history clearly illustrates, changes contrary to the regimes immediate interests, no matter the potential, will never be tolerated.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, it is the interaction of the forces underlying power and utopia, which simultaneously create and maintain Man's social configurations, regardless of the specific ideologies or systems of government they are founded upon. The former embodies stability, while the latter, flexibility and creativity. The institutions of power exhibited as the manifestation of authority seek to reinforce and extend their control over the existing social hierarchy by sustaining the continuity of the historical traditions that legitimise their positions of authority. However, all these ruling institutions are founded upon the creative spirit embodied within the ideals, goals, and visions of the individuals comprising the social realm. Similarly, freedom in

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<sup>10</sup>Bertrand Russell, *Authority and The Individual*. (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1949) Pg. 41.

the form of an emergent creative expression, and the cultural attributes it spawns, are dependent on power for their manifestation, just as power relies on the unique spirit of the individuals to breath life into its constructs. In conclusion, it is the interaction between the forces underlying power and utopia which provides the framework of interdependence allowing individuals to embark on the fulfilment of their potential, while the subsequent actions of their creative spirit perpetuates such a framework. One instigates the activity of the other, while simultaneously depending on this action for its ultimate expression. Hence, the attributes of power and utopia are intricately connected to the intrinsic being facilitating the human condition and the social configurations emerging within it. Without a perpetual equilibrium between these attributes, the total realisation of Man's creative potential, is severely hindered, if not largely impossible.

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